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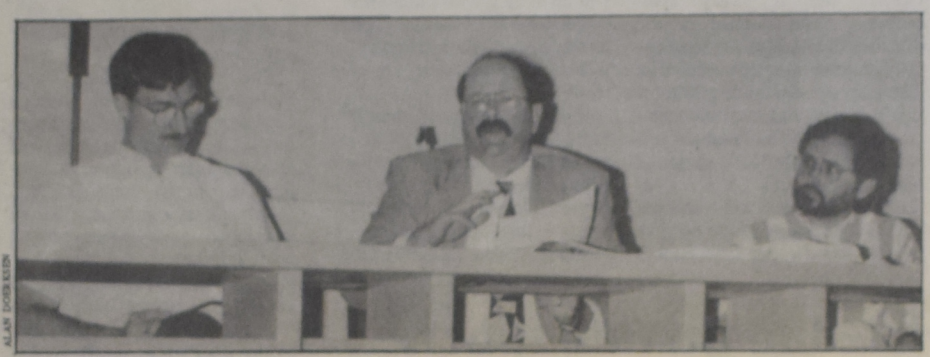
Scholars back different interpretations of Toronto Blessing

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — Christians have had sharp differences over what is happening at the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship, home of the "Toronto Blessing." These different views were discussed by a panel of biblical scholars at the annual conference of the Canadian Evangelical Theological Association held at Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary in St. Catharines last week.

Three out of the four panelists were positive in their analysis of the Toronto Blessing, but one, James Beverley of Ontario Theological Seminary, had some serious criticisms of the airport church. Some audience members also strongly criticized the church and its practices.

On the positive side, Beverley said the church is not a counterfeit revival. "I believe there has been real spiritual renewal.... I



ALAN DOERKSEN

James Beverley (center) makes a point as Steve Long (left) and Gerry Steingard listen

celebrate the heart of God that is at the core." He criticized those who have made "nasty diatribes" against the airport church.

However, Beverley criticized the church for its weak preaching, something about which hundreds of people have commented to him. "It astonished me how long it has taken [the church] to have effective preaching," he said. "Why not bring in the best charismatic preachers going?" He gave the example of one guest preacher who had tried to give a sermon but had laughed for 25 minutes while churchgoers 'waved' the Spirit at him. Later on, that speaker changed his text and preached on a different subject.

Beverley also criticized the lack of "decency and order" at church meetings. He cited two examples: one church leader had slapped people he was praying for, and "two people were 'shooting' the Holy Spirit at each other."

"I think the manifestations are central. I worry about that." Beverley said that he knows churches that have been split over this issue. The Apostle Paul wrote that worship services are to be decent and in order, Beverley emphasized. He questioned how the gift of prophecy is handled at the church, and noted that there is a danger of the church becoming both elitist and anti-intellectual. It should also "exercise more care in its treatment of critics."

Steve Long, a pastor at the airport church, defended the church and explained his own involvement. Long comes from "a very conservative Baptist upbringing" and was formerly the pastor of a Baptist church in Mississauga. He grew frustrated there because "we continually had people at the church divided against each other ... we were spending so much time on insignificant things."

Shock and surprise

In early 1994, Long and his wife visited the airport church. "I was shocked. I was surprised," he says. In response, he began his own study of the Bible to find what it had to say about the Holy Spirit. "I decided that all of the gifts of the Spirit were valid."

Then, when Long was counselling and praying for a woman at his church she fell to the floor. "When she got up off the floor an hour later she was transformed," says Long.

Later, Long was "loaned" to the airport church to help administer its meetings. After six months, he joined the church's staff. The Toronto Blessing has transformed his life, he says. "I'm here to tell you I'm a

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Speaker at women's conference unmasks gender idol

Bert Witvoet

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — According to Reformed creation theology, women and men are equally made and equally called by God, says Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen. "God did not say to the woman, 'Be fruitful and multiply' and to the man, 'Subdue the earth.' God blessed both man and woman and told both of them to be fruitful, fill the earth and subdue it."

BERT WITVOET

Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen speaks on "Principalities, Powers and Gender Relations."

Stewart Van Leeuwen spoke to 125 women at the Third Annual Conference for Women in the Christian Reformed Church held at Jubilee Fellowship CRC. The title of her talk was "Principalities, Powers and Gender Relations." It was clear from her speech that she was leaning heavily on Lesslie Newbiggin's *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society.*

Principalities and powers, which in the New Testament often refer to human authority structures, are spiritual, are necessary but can, and do, become demonic, said Stewart Van Leeuwen. Quoting Reformed scholar Lewis Smedes, she added that it's simple to make an idol of any structure: "Just slice one piece from reality and expect miracles from it."

Gender gap

Gender relations have been demonized as well, she suggested, as rigidly separate roles and spheres have been created for men and women. Ever since the Industrial Revolution created a wider gap between public life and private life, men have been touted as the best agents for public life and women have

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News

Scholars divided over 'manifestations' at airport church

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very different person."

About the manifestations at the church, Long says, "[Most of what] has happened is wonderful fruit.... Every single night God is at work, the Enemy is at work, and there's people trying to get attention." Reflecting on other revivals, Long said, "I think they all started with the church being renewed and refreshed."

"In the last two years, we've had 10,000 people come forward" to commit their lives to God. "I think that's where things are going."

Long agrees

Long agrees that there are many nights that the preaching is lacking. But he added that the church's staff meets regularly to discuss the effectiveness of speakers, and some speakers are not invited back.

There is an order to the airport church's services, he insists: 45 minutes of worship time (including testimonies), 25 to 45 minutes of teaching, and 25 to 45 minutes of prayer time.

"As a church, we're trying very hard to listen to the critics," he says.

Clark Pinnock of McMaster Divinity School is impressed with the Toronto Blessing. He has been "blessed" at the airport church and is "very sympathetic." The essence of the Toronto Blessing is "fundamentally celebration. It's euphoria. There's so much freedom. I don't accept that the manifestations are bad. The laughter is a wonderful symbol. It's playful," Pinnock says.

He welcomes the Toronto Blessing "because of the poverty of feelings in our churches.... God is saying, 'Come on, loosen up.'"

Pinnock commented on the church's recent split from the Association of Vineyard Churches. "The exotic and bizarre [are] bothering Wimber." Pinnock says the manifestations are of the Spirit and are central to the airport church.

He agreed with Beverley that the church's teaching can be "lacking and fringy." But he added, "I don't need a lecture. I'm up to here with rationality."

The Toronto Blessing "speaks to the heart," he insisted. "The bad stuff is dwarfed by the good stuff."

Pinnock mentioned that John Stott has been uneasy with and has criticized the falling backward of people prayed for at the airport church. Pinnock interpreted this phenomenon as meaning: "You fall into God's love and rest there."

Later, one member of the audience objected to this comment, saying, "My very dear friend John Stott has been slandered." She compared the idea of falling backward with fertility religions and temple prostitution. Pinnock apologized for his comments about Stott and explained that evangelicals rarely move much in worship services. The Western church has "a fear of the body," he said.

Letting the heart catch up

The fourth panelist, Gerry Steingard, pastor of Jubilee Christian Fellowship in Stratford, Ont., said his life was changed after going to a conference run by John Wimber. "God was saying to me, 'You've developed your mind, now I want your heart to catch up.'"

In early 1994, Steingard visited the airport church and had his first tangible experience of the Holy Spirit. Later on, his own church experienced similar manifestations.

The Toronto Blessing is the first step of a revival, he said. "It can't be ignored, and I'm enjoying it.... I'm ecstatic to see what God's been doing."

He says fear the Toronto Blessing is "the fear of bizarre manifestations" and "the fear of losing control, especially for leaders." He quoted theologian Charles Spurgeon: "Revival is a season of glorious disorder."

Steingard added, "This is not a time to put your Bible on the shelf and let it collect dust. The Lord is calling us to childlike trust. It's been a process for me to be childlike and not anti-intellectual."

A question period followed the discussion time. One woman noted the "increasing human-centredness" of worship at the airport church. "A kind of disintegration takes place at the end of the service. Everyone does their own thing." In her opinion, some manifestations were "from the other side."

Steingard responded: "When the presence of God is there, the demonic presences are agitated." He said he was sad to hear about increasing human-centredness.

Another person asked Long about the effects of the church leaving the Vineyard. Long said he and other staff members were "very surprised" about that. Long interpreted Wimber's viewpoint as being: "If I'm not able to pastor what's going on, I'm releasing you." Long added, "We've remained very good friends with the Vineyard."

The panel discussion was part of the Learned Societies Conference, held this year at Brock University and Concordia Seminary.

Women restricted to private sphere

...conti nued from page 1
been restricted to the private sphere.

Public life, which includes the academy, the market place, the political forum and military service, has been characterized by aggression and competitiveness, said Stewart Van Leeuwen. Private life, on the other hand, which enfolds domestic functions, sexual activity, friendship and religion, has been marked by nurturance and community, or as Sigmund Freud put it: "*Kinder, Kuche und Kirche* (children, cooking and church)."

Both women and religion were seen as best suitable for the private sphere because they were not rational enough. According to Stewart Van Leeuwen, 20th century evangelicals bought into the dichotomy of gender roles and have absolutized gender complementarity.

This has worked itself into Western culture to the extent that a sociology class, when asked to identify certain human qualities as belonging to the male or female sphere, checked off the fruits of the Spirit (peace, joy, patience, kindness and gentleness) as feminine characteristics. This seems to suggest that in order for a man to become a Christian, he has to become more feminine, said Stewart Van Leeuwen.

Both men and women need deliverance from these powers called gender complementarity, she added. Christ has unmasked these powers as the structures lose their absoluteness. "We should be neither knee-jerk conservatives nor anarchists, but patient revolutionaries."

Time for celebration

The conference for women held on May 25 and 26, featured workshops on Promise Keepers (Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen), dance (Belma Vardy), art (Elly Hendriks), worship (Colleen Reinders and Grace Moes), urban ministry (Diann Takens-Cerbone), conflict (Agnes Vrieze Bos), abuse (Lorelei Koke), communication (Judy Cook), story writing (Nandy Heule), God's names (Mirth Vos), spiritual gifts (Kim Adams Dykstra), leadership (Stephanie Baker Collins), dance (Nancy Marsman) and prayer (Jocelyn Paas).

The purpose of such conferences was stated in a brochure as follows: "To give CRC women the opportunity to encourage and support one another, to be a gathering to celebrate women's gifts and contributions, to be an opportunity for inspiration, education and worship, and to offer a time to share our stories."

A joint worship service with members of Jubilee Fellowship CRC the following morning and a separate lunch and worship time concluded the conference. During the church worship Mary Hulst Antonides, associate pastor of Eastern Ave CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich., preached on how Job granted his three daughters an inheritance along with their brothers.

The 1997 women's conference is expected to be held in Strathroy, Ont.

Christian feminist sees promise in Promise Keepers

Bert Witvoet

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen is "cautiously optimistic" when it comes to the men's movement Promise Keepers. She especially finds the organization's emphasis on racial reconciliation a strong point.

What worries her somewhat is Promise Keepers's oblique connection with sports, a North American idol that has done much harm to men's self-image. Promise Keepers hold its gatherings in large sports stadiums, founder Bill McCartney was a college football coach, and Promise Keepers' *New Man's* magazine uses sports and military metaphors.

But even a Jewish lesbian feminist who attended a Promise Keepers convention reported rather favorably on the men's willingness to accept responsibility for what went wrong in their marriages and families, said Stewart Van Leeuwen.

She sees Promise Keepers as a revivalist organization. It emphasizes reaching as many as possible, and it has the usual ecumenical ambiguities.

The religious right has no use for Promise Keepers, she says, because it sees Promise Keepers as a para-church organization, bypassing or competing with church elders and pastors. The religious right also dislikes the idea of rubbing shoulders with Roman Catholics.

Stewart Van Leeuwen wonders if in its attempt to be ecumenical and cross-racial Promise Keepers is overlooking the sexism among certain ethnic groups. "Is there a willingness to sacrifice female empowerment?" she asked. "I hope not."

Stewart Van Leeuwen will feel a whole lot better, she says, if she sees the following articles in *New Man*: "What did I learn by staying home?" and "My daughter the Seminarian."

Just like racial reconciliation is no longer an option for Promise Keepers, the organization should make gender reconciliation an essential part of its program. "It's a promising start, but the jury is still out" she said in her final comments about Promise Keepers.

Quebec, Aboriginals need joint place in constitution

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George Erasmus

Bert Witvoet

SCARBOROUGH, Ont. — An ad hoc working group of 24 Canadians with a history of inter-faith activities met in Scarborough from May 4-6 to discuss Canada's future.

Called Opportunity Canada, none of the participants are currently holding political office and all say it is wrong to deal with Quebec first and talk about Natives later.

And all want to change the constitutional discussion from a focus on rights to a focus on core values and relationships between communities and peoples.

Included in the group are a number of professors, several former politicians such as former premier of Saskatchewan Allan Blakeney, former prime

CC FILES

Archbishop E. W. Scott

minister of Canada Joe Clark and former Quebec journalist and MPP Claude Ryan, religious leaders such as Rabbi Dow Marmur and Archbishop E.W. Scott, Native representative George Erasmus, and public affairs consultant Gerald Vandezande.

Encourage diversity

In a paper called "Opportunity Canada — Chairperson's Reflections" Scott made the observation that, "whereas people outside Canada see Canada as one of the best places in the world in which to live, internally, at this point, negative attitudes seem to predominate over positive ones."

One of the positive aspects about Canada identified by the group, writes Scott, is that the country acknowledges and encourages diversity. "There was no desire expressed to become a country which emphasized 'nationalism' as does the United States and no desire to see Canada become a country in which the social contract was seen to be between individuals and the government."

No delay for the Natives

One important development at the consultation, according to Opportunity Canada's executive co-ordinator Wilber Sutherland, was the unanimous agreement that no solution should be sought to Quebec's concerns apart from the concerns of Aboriginal peoples.

Sutherland said that when one of the participants heard from Claude Ryan that a B.C. conference had recommended that Quebec should be dealt with first, and then, after that, the Aboriginals, he had said, "That's a lie. I don't believe you."

The group eventually agreed that both concerns could be addressed through a new understanding of Canada and that distinct societies "could be given recognition and a measure of sovereignty within a united and stronger Canada," says a report from the working group of Opportunity Canada.

Reasons for hope

Both Sutherland and Vandezande said at a press conference held at the annual Canadian Church Press convention that they were enthusiastic about the possible outcome of the Opportunity Canada meeting. Retired Quebec Liberal MPP Claude Ryan said he would take the recommendations of the group to Quebec Liberal leader Daniel Johnson, and George Erasmus also promised to place the groups' work before his constituency.

The key value that emerged at the consultation was the principle of respect, said Vandezande. This principle applies to the land as well as to the various peoples living on the land.

He said that the group felt strongly that one should not just talk about individual Canadians but recognize that Canada is a community of communities.

Sutherland added that "diversity can hold us together only if we share core values."

Vandezande urged the church press to think beyond regionalism and focus on what makes for a genuine Canadian identity.

The group agreed to consider holding a Pan Canada conference after the informal style of Opportunity Canada (participants, who had been asked to wear casual clothes, sat in a circle and discussed freely with little guidance from the chair). Such a conference would be held in 1997, following the Royal Commission Report on Aboriginal Affairs and further developments relating to the Quebec question.

German Protestant leaders told to abandon 'socialist utopian dreams'

COBURG, Germany (EP) — Protestant church leaders in Germany need to get over their socialist utopian dreams, a former leading member of the Protestant church in Germany told a meeting of conservative Protestants in Coburg. Retired regional bishop Hans von Keler lamented that politicians and church leaders in the West were still sympathetic to the former communist regime in East Germany.

Six years after the fall of socialism, a "homesickness" for the old system is growing, he said. Von Keler reminded his listeners that atheism is a fundamental part of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, and urged them not to trivialize the persecution of Christians under communist and socialist governments. "The millions of victims are atrocious," he said.

Stalin no hero

Of 118 Russian Orthodox bishops, only four survived Stalin's persecution, he noted, and growing atheism took its toll on morality in communist and socialist nations.

Klaus Motschmann, deputy chairperson of the German Protestant association *Notgemeinschaft* agreed, saying that large sections of the Protestant church in Germany have not come to terms with the fall of socialism and noting that many Protestant intellectuals still hold an unwavering belief in "the wonderful world of Socialism."

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Editorials

Teachers need to plug into identity development of students

I attended another class reunion of former students. This time it was the Class of '65 of Hamilton District Christian High School.

It was a satisfying experience to see what had happened to all these youthful souls of the '60s. As I talked to several former students, I was struck by how important the nurturing or non-nurturing of self-esteem was during those critical teenage years. Whether these students had had good learning years at HDCH had depended a lot on how well they had been accepted socially by fellow students and staff.

A matter of stature

One alumnus recalled how small of stature he had been for his age when he entered high school and how this had worked against him when it was not positively addressed. He mentioned how the remark, "They make them smaller every year," made by two teachers who passed him in the hallway on the first day of school, had hurt him. He also recalled how he was often overlooked when his classmates picked teams for an informal soccer or football game. Left undrafted, he would more or less on his own decide which group that didn't want him he would join.

He also remembered how a girl in his class had declined a date with him. He had not believed her excuse that she already had a date. He was convinced that she just didn't want to go out with "a wimp." The fact that he now shared these incidents without bitterness showed that he had dealt with it. Nevertheless, it was clear that these experiences had prevented him from getting the most out of his high school years.

Affirmation ranks high

Another alumnus told me how being selected for a role in the school play of that year had changed her life. The experience had boosted her self-image and she felt a different person after that. She thanked me for this selection more than 30 years later.

Never was it more clear to me than at this reunion that social acceptance and affirmation rank extremely high on the list of things that promote learning. Few things that happen at high school have such lasting impact.

The reason is that adolescence is a period of great uncertainty when it comes to self-identity. Too many biological and psychological changes are taking place to make for an easy transition from childhood to adulthood. According to Don Moncrieff of Christian Counselling Services in Toronto, adolescents experience a shift from adaptation to the family to wanting to find their identity in other relationships, especially with their peers.

Proper attention

I am sure that today's teachers have studied these and related pedagogical matters in much greater depth than did we in the '60s. I trust that attention is paid to improving the social climate at schools and to understanding the developmental sequences through which an adolescent has to move in order to develop a healthy sense of self-identity. Positive interpersonal relations are an absolute must for a healthy development of mind and spirit. And classrooms should be places where the heart directs the mind. Playgrounds and sports fields, too, should be nurturing as well as challenging places.

Don Moncrieff recommends the book *In Over Our Heads* by Robert Kegan as a helpful treatment of the subject of developmental steps. Perhaps the book might trigger a workshop or two for professional development in which the focus is on stages of development towards a healthy sense of self-identity.

My impression from class reunions is that, in most cases, teachers will be remembered fondly not for how well they knew their subjects (though that is not an unessential matter) but for how well they appreciated and understood their students. **BW**

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The proof of gender equality is in the pudding

I attended part of the Conference for Women in the Christian Reformed Church last weekend, and asked myself why it is that so many brothers and sisters in Christ are suspicious of this women's event. Is it because it has a political side? I believe that's one of the reasons. Something that's political seeks influence, and that is deemed wrong, especially when it comes to women.

But why should something that seeks to influence arouse suspicion?

A group like this would find much greater acceptance if sought to promote an existing and church-approved program. A women's conference called for the purpose of supporting the Back to God Hour radio ministry or Christian education would be blessed by all. Never mind that *that* has a political purpose too. But a women's conference that seeks to enlarge the role and place of women in the church and home from that given by a traditionally patriarchical community is going to run into opposition and resentment.

What's wrong with men?

That, of course, is usually the price one pays for seeking fundamental changes. The only question one needs to ask is whether these changes are desirable and good. Once that question has been answered in the affirmative, the price is bearable.

One of the ways we could use to test the validity of the women's movement is to ask why it is that men are in crisis. Why have men moved so far away from the fruit of the Spirit, so that a sociology class mentioned in my report on the conference (see p. 1) identifies this fruit as feminine? Why have so many men become abusive in their relationships with women and children? Why do men find it difficult to express feelings other than anger? Why do so many men find safety in objective reasoning. Why is it so hard for many men to say "I'm sorry"? Does it perhaps have something to do with their presumed superiority in giving leadership?

Try it, you'll like it

This is not the place to quote Bible texts that provide new insights into male/female relations. That has been done ad infinitum and seems to persuade no one. But why not try a new way of doing things and see what the results are? Have you ever worked in pastoral care with women and seen how well they do the work? Have you ever heard a woman preach? Have you ever experienced what it is like to be on an equal footing with your spouse, giving full weight to her unique ways of solving problems?

I am hoping for a gentler church and home, where the fruit of the Spirit applies to men as well as women. **BW**

Letters

Let's leave Canada a better place

Bill C-33, a bill that will have grave repercussions for Christian values and the traditional family, was rammed through Parliament in 10 days. I wonder how many Christians have shown their concern and disgust. How many wrote a letter to the editor of their local paper, wrote a letter to or phoned their MP or the Prime Minister of the Justice Minister? Surely Christians aren't going to sit in their comfortable pews and allow our government to protect a lifestyle that the Bible calls detestable (Lev. 18:22)!

Many Christians say they won't be activists but they will pray. Prayer is vital, but after prayer we must act. If your child were being molested, would you run into your bedroom and fall on your knees and ask God to intervene, or would you immediately confront the molester and force him to stop?

God will do what we cannot do, things like saving us and sanctifying us; but he will not do for us what we can do for ourselves. He will help and strengthen us, but we must show our concern by actively opposing legislation that condones immorality.

If we Christians are going to influence our nation for good, we must become a lot more politically active. We should realize that Canada's number one problem is not a debt problem but a moral one. Therefore, if we work with God in addressing the moral problems plaguing our nation, God will give us the wisdom to deal with the debt problem.

Let's try, with God's help, to leave Canada a better place for our children and grandchildren (if God tarries).

Dave Switzer
Frankford, Ont.

Church leaders missed satisfying meal of love

The long-awaited conference for people with disabilities held at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ont., is history. It was an unqualified success. Many people with disabilities and their care givers feasted At The King's Table on a wonderful menu of love, grace, joy and fellowship. It was an experience in kinship both with each other and with our Savior and healer, Jesus Christ. Many with emotional and spiritual scars were soothed with a balm of acceptance and love. There was a sense of empowerment and Joni was a big hit.

But I was discouraged by the lack of church leadership involvement in the 20 Saturday workshops, many having to do with learning about and relating to people with a variety of disabilities. It seems to me that a wonderful opportunity to be involved and learn from us was missed.

A number of churches did encourage and lend financial aid to the disabled in their communities. We commend them and thank the Lord. Many did come to the Saturday evening rally, which was well-attended. Perhaps many ministers, elders and church leaders will have been encouraged to involve themselves more totally in the lives of those whose very reason for living has been so dramatically disrupted. Maybe it was not made clear enough to them that the workshops were largely for them also.

In spite of my disappointment in this one thing, the whole three-day weekend left me personally with a real feeling of God's acceptance and love. My self worth, even though I have to live with my M.S., was again confirmed because of God's love and the acceptance of my peers.

Bert Zwiers
Waterdown, Ont.

Dare to be a Daniel!

While I respect CPJ's serious attempts to come to grips with current social and moral issues facing society, I was deeply saddened when I read that Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) does not want to offer solutions to moral and theological dilemmas or to argue about personal or communal beliefs "as outlined in" A Public Justice approach to Legal Equality Rights for Gay or Lesbian Neighbors "CPJ lobbyist seeks justice for all including gays" (April 26, 1996).

Make no mistake about it, Mr. Vandezande, Christians, including you and me, are indeed called upon to be "public watchdog(s)" when it comes to offering moral opinions and solutions to whatever ails society, based on what the Bible has to say. And yes, the Bible is relevant to 1996 societal issues.

No doubt about it, Bill 33 and Senate Bill S2, which seek to add sexual orientation to Canada's Human Rights act, are contrary to what the Bible teaches and therefore weaken the fabric of society by undermining traditional, man-woman marriage and family structures. Those relationships may be imperfect but they're still the best.

So why not call a spade a spade and join the millions across Canada, including many who are not Christians, in voicing unequivocal opposition to these pieces of legislation that are clearly detrimental to society as a whole?

I am reminded of the children's song "dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone," and of the Bible's injunctions "Watch and pray so that you will not fall" (Matt.26:41).

Henry Lammers
St. Catharines, Ont.

Christ calls us to worship

The opinion piece of May 3 by Johannes DeViet, "Do we still value going to church?" was both good and timely, especially the emphasis on our presence as members of the Body of Christ and not wanting to diminish that body by being absent from worship.

I believe that the argument is considerably strengthened by pointing to the Lord's call to worship that comes to each and all of the members of the body through the elders as the spiritual rulers of the church.That call is made strikingly realistic in what used to be called the "Votum" and "Salutation," or the "Call to worship" and the "Lord's greeting." These were never intended to be frivolous formalities to kick off a service at which praying and preaching were the main concerns. These are official acts of ordained ministers who, among other things, are called to speak for Christ in the ministry of the Word.

When Christ calls us to worship and greets us when we come, we are really standing on holy ground. Body members who hear that call and that greeting have no other choice than to stand before God and worship. They may be absent only when other duties have priority because of their urgency, or because they are physically unable to respond.

It may not be accidental that in many services the votum and salutation have disappeared (and I'm not referring just to the latinized terminology). Is it possible that they have been removed because it is a heavy responsibility to speak a greeting from the Lord who has called us together for worship? Especially when, as in many evening services, over half the congregation has seen fit to ignore that call to worship? Better to have just a come-if-you-are-up-to-it kind of service, and if you really get what you like, you might come again. If it's that kind of a service you may do almost anything you like as a leader, as long as it brings in an audience, or the "seekers."

But worship presupposes the presence of the Lord himself. If you catch that vision you can be blessed even by very ordinary liturgy and very ordinary or even poor preaching. Christ's presence will be experienced and going to church will have inestimable "value." And a real, scriptural benediction, not just a doxological prayer or a pious wish, will cap it off. Without this, worship will continue to decline.

Tymen E. Hofman
Grand Rapids, Mich.

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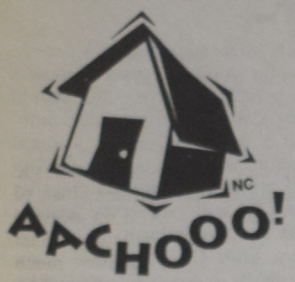

OTTAWA (NC) — Almost everyone is concerned about outdoor pollution. Few people, however, realize that the air they breathe inside their homes may actually be more hazardous to their health than air they breathe outside.

The link between human shelter and health is not new — even caves had indoor air quality problems. But as housing has become more complex, and materials more chemically-based, the risks to human health have increased. Today, depending on your level of sensitivity, you may be negatively affected by anything from furniture to fuel oil, wax to wallpaper.

Mold is another major source of trouble, especially for allegry sufferers. Molds grow wherever there is moisture. They can be found inside, outside and within the very structure of the house; in kitchens, bathrooms, carpets and walls.

The indoor environment is also affected by the quality of the outdoor air (pollution levels, temperature and humidity) and by radon and other soil gases which enter through leaks and cracks in the foundation. Regardless of how healthy you are, cleaner indoor air will help improve your sense of well-being.

Over the past several years, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has undertaken extensive research on indoor air quality. Useful information generated from this research is now available to the general public in the form of a booklet called "The Clean Air Guide," and a companion video called "This Clean House."

The package, while not a cure-all, does contain a series of step-by-step directions, which, if followed, will help improve the air quality in your home, and ultimately your health and well-being.

For information on how to obtain the guide and video call 1-800-668-CMHC.

New sensor can tell cooks when to dump the oil

TORONTO (Canadian Scene) — A serious health problem in the food service industry — when to discard fat and oil used in frying foods — has been solved by Guelph University.

Auri Mittal, a professional engineer, Professor Gord Hayward of Guelph, and graduate student Satheesh Paul have developed an inexpensive sensor which indicates when fat or oil used for frying foods needs to be replaced. Currently, restaurants determine the discarding time of oil and fat by observing its color, odor, excessive foaming and smoking, which inexperienced employees cannot always recognize. For restaurant use, the sensor will retail for between $300 and $500. A version for home use will sell for about $150.

Drinkers of European-style coffee, beware!

BERKELEY, Calif. (UC Berkeley Wellness Letter) — Scores of studies on caffeine have failed to establish any conclusive link to heart disease. The latest North American research was presented in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. A study followed the coffee-drinking habits of 85,000 nurses for 10-years; it found that subjects who drank even six or more cups of coffee a day face no increased risk of coronary artery disease. Coffee drinkers *seem* to have more heart disease, but only because more of them smoke, which imperils the heart.

High octane

However, several studies have found that a high intake of unfiltered, European-style coffee, such as that made in a French press (a carafe with a plunger), or Turkish/Greek coffee, does boost blood cholesterol. Researchers in the Netherlands have figured out why. They've identified substances called diterpenes which are found in oil droplets floating in such coffee, as well as in the sediment.

The Dutch researchers concluded that drinking five cups a day could boost cholesterol eight to 10 milligrams. Espresso had a similar, though slightly smaller, effect. Drip coffee (made with a paper filter) and percolated coffee — the types most North Americans drink — contain only small amounts of diterpenes and are no problem.

There was no report on whether there's any difference in diterpene levels depending on the use of pre-ground or whole-bean coffee, or on regular roast or high-oil dark roasts.

Cancer mortality rate drops

OTTAWA (Canadian Scene) — According to Statistics Canada, over the past decade, mortality rates for several types of cancer have dropped. The overall cancer mortality rate among men has declined slightly but steadily to 241 per 100,000 from a high of 253 per 100,000 in 1988. Among women, the overall mortality rate has remained stable. However, mortality and incidence rates are rising steadily for prostate cancer among men and lung cancer among women.

Cleaning up

Marian den Boer

"How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?" (Matt.7:4).

In our neighborhood, Monday is garbage day. One gusty, grey, garbage-day morning while waiting patiently in the van out in the driveway for Angela and Alison so I could drive them to school, I noticed that some of the garbage from the townhouses across the road had blown into the middle of the intersection next to our home.

I had an urge to run out and pick up this garbage, but I noticed a garbage man in a reflector vest pacing on the other side of the road apparently waiting for traffic to subside so he could do it.

Then I realized he didn't intend to pick up the garbage; he was merely watching it. Now why would that be? Maybe the garbage people were fed up with the way garbage was always allowed to blow around. Maybe this was proof for the supervisor to behold.

On the three-kilometre drive to the girls' school and home again, I pondered the garbage situation. I came to the conclusion that the only neighborly thing to do would be to pick up that garbage myself.

Not as it seemed

Sure enough, when I came back to the intersection, the garbage was still in the middle of the road, but now a garbage truck was parked right beside it — and not a garbage man in sight. There was hardly room left in the intersection for a vehicle to drive by.

I parked the van, stepped out, and picked up a Tide box and much larger box. For boxes that had blown out onto the road, they were surprisingly heavy. In fact, I noticed they were packed with garbage.

"Ma'mam, ma'mam. What are you doing?" I heard as I heaved the tide box onto the garbage pile and was about to drag the other one as well.

"I'm cleaning up," I proclaimed indignantly. "There is no reason to keep garbage in the middle of the road."

"Yes, there is ma'mam," he explained patiently. "We spilled hydraulic fluid here. Our line sprung a leak..., a car drives over that it could cause a serious accident."

"Oh, sorry," I mumbled as I dropped the big heavy box back onto the road. For the first time; I noticed the slippery oily fluid all over my hands.

When I got home I had to scrub my hands, and wash my coat and pants besides. Moral of the story: don't be too quick to judge other people's garbage.

Marian den Boer is working on minding her own business in Hamilton, Ont., where she lives with her husband and five children.

ARTS & MEDIA

Mission Impossible

'This film will self-destruct...'

Marian Van Til

Rated PG-13
Stars Tom Cruise, Jon Voight, Emmanuelle Beart, Henry Czerny, Kristin Scott-Thomas, Vanessa Redgrave. Written by Robert Towne and David Koepp. Directed by Brian De Palma. Based on the television show developed by Bruce Geller.

Mission: Impossible, the 1960s television show, pitted the Impossible Mission Force (IMF), a five-person, highly professional team with high morals, against the machinations of drug smugglers, entrepreneurs gone wrong, greedy expatriots, corrupt foreign service operatives and spies of all sorts.

The show hooked an audience of devoted fans through intelligent scripts which highlighted the IMF's camaradie and teamwork, their fascinating ability to change identities, and the excitement of ahead-of-its-time electronic wizardry in action against the Cold-War bad guys.

Part of the fun as a viewer was trying to figure out how in the world they would approach *this* problem or get out of *that* mess. If the show was pretty much morally black and white and never showed us the characters' personal lives, the IMF members had an appealing intelligence and reassuring integrity. What's more, the emphasis was not on violence. While the bad guys might die doublecrossing each other, they didn't often die at the hands of the IMF; they were handed over to the law to serve their prison sentences. (Incidentally, the show is still attracting old fans and new; it appears every night of the week on a U.S. cable channel.)

No motivation

It's clear that *Mission Impossible*, the movie, comes out of a new age, one more jaded and individualistic. The scheming and wizardry are even more sophisticated now, but the tightly knit team and most of the integrity are gone.

When the IMF team disintegrates early in the film, we watch one remaining member, a maverick (Tom Cruise), outsmart the bad guys by forming a temporary "team," motivated by revenge and previous ill treatment.

We never get to know any of the characters to any degree — not even Tom Cruise's. It's not clear who some of the people are, or who's a bad guy and who isn't. That's fine if the story line is coherent, but this one isn't. And ultimately, the main dilemma seems somewhat forced in this post-Cold War era.

When one of the major IMF characters turns out to be very different than what he appears to be, it's not believable. Through the TV show we had come to know his solid character. The film introduces us to this man as we've known him, but then offers no development of his character that would explain the immense change in him.

Maverick Tom Cruise outsmarts the bad guys in Mission Impossible

That highlights one problem with making films based on TV shows. Television is a repetitive medium. Over a long period a good weekly show lets viewers get to know characters at various levels.

Film works in a different manner. It has two hours to build characters, or in this case, build on characters its viewers already know. When it is building on known characters it can't (or shouldn't) fundamentally change those characters without developing motivation for the changes. This film does that, to its detriment. And it's a measure of its overall shallowness that we don't even care that much when it happens: this film character is an interloper, not someone we know.

Hello, James Bond

The TV show concentrated on outwitting opponents through impeccable timing, carefully thought-out procedure, and teamwork; the movie emphasizes stealth and outwitting opponents too, but in a somewhat gloating manner. And, more along the lines of James Bond than the IMF, it climaxes with a dangerous, extended chase scene full of *impossible* acrobatics coming to an inevitable deadly end.

This movie will no doubt draw large crowds, some to watch Tom Cruise, some who were or are fans of the TV show. But in the end it keeps viewers' interest because of its hardware, not its human beings. Computer technology is the name of this game. That being the case, the scene during which CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, is infiltrated is the highlight of the film.

Small book makes big contribution to Dutch immigration history

Rem Kooistra

Leaving Home Forever

By Klaas and Reindert De Vries.
Windsor, Ont.: Netherlandic Press, 1995. 64 pp.

The Netherlandic Press continues to publish a number of most interesting books. After John Terpstra's *Naked Trees, Forty Days and Forty Nights* and *Captain Kintail*, and Diana Brebner's *Radiant Life Forms* and *The Golden Lotus* in 1993, editors Joan Magee and Hendrika Ruger began a new series last year called *Electa. Separation and Inheritance* (see review, CC Jan. 26, 1996) and *Leaving Home Forever* are the beginning of that series.

Leaving Home Forever by two De Vries brothers, Klaas and Reindert, is a translation from the Dutch of a rare booklet entitled *Van Amsterdam naar Canada* (*From Amsterdam to Canada*); the original booklet was printed in October 1892.

This is the story of the brothers' immigration. They left Amsterdam on May 14, 1892, aboard the steamer the *Didam*, and arrived in Brockville, Ont., on June 2 via New York City.

From Brockville the journey continued by train to Winnipeg, and from there, to Yorkton. From Yorkton the De Vrieses had to walk almost 20 miles to the farm where they were scheduled to start working. Their journal demonstrates that travelling in the late 19th century was not to be taken for granted.

Glimpse into the 19th century

This little book opens with a valuable preface by historian J.Th.J. Krijff, who tells about the economic and social situation in the Netherlands at the end of the Great Depression there (1873-1896). One of the poorest areas was the south-eastern part of the province of Friesland. Most people were unemployed, especially during the winter, and had to live on charity. Sod huts were the usual dwellings for many of the peat workers.

So the De Vrieses decided to leave Jubbega-Schurega where they lived and move to Canada. Canada was advertising for strong young men to help with the development of that immense country.

In an appendix, Klaas De Vries tells the story of the establishment of the Christian Reformed Church in Elmwood (Winnipeg) in 1907. The Elmwood church was only the second Christian Reformed congregation in Canada (after Nobleford — then Nijverdal).

Hendrika Ruger has produced an almost perfect translation of the old Dutch documents. The physical appearance of this book is also impeccable. A number of excellent illustrations help considerably to complement the text.

With the support of the Canada Council, an important part of the history of the pre-war Dutch Reformed immigration to Canada has been preserved for us and future generations.

Rem Kooistra is a retired Christian Reformed pastor and campus chaplain who lives in Waterloo, Ont.

Church

Filipino pastor murdered in his church

MANILA, Philippines (Compass Direct) — Pastor Severino Bagtasos III, 30, was murdered by a lone gunman during a Sunday service at his Mindanao church on January 23. Bagtasos was sitting in a front row pew listening to his sister conclude her message on heaven when he was approached from behind by the gunman, who fired two bullets. One bullet went through the pastor's cheek, the other through his chest.

His stunned 60-member congregation thought at first that the gunshots were the sound of firecrackers, which were frequently thrown into the church by hecklers. Only after his body slumped to the ground did they realize what had happened.

Bagtasos had previously received several death threats which were attributed to his ongoing evangelistic work among Muslims.

The church, affiliated with the Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches, the largest denomination in Mindanao, was burned in 1993. The congregation continued, and its ministry prospered under Bagtasos' leadership.

Challenged others to be faithful

One of his church members testified before the more than 800 attendees at the funeral: "Junie (as he was fondly called by those who knew him well) was always patient. He never stopped challenging us to be faithful to the Lord. Rain or shine, Junie was there. He was instrumental in winning my husband to the Lord. I was a lukewarm Christian until Junie encouraged me in my walk with God."

Some witnesses claim that only a few hours before he was killed, Bagtasos was seen distributing tracts among the people in Barangay Alat, Jolo. Jolo is the home province of Nur Misuari, the chair of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). MNLF is the country's main Muslim rebel group.

According to one church leader, an acknowledged authority on Islam, the simple act of Bagtasos passing out gospel tracts could have triggered the shooting, since that day was the start of the worldwide Muslim observance of Ramadan. Some Muslim sects believe that if you kill an enemy of Allah on the first day of Ramadan, the act will assure you passage to paradise.

The Bagtasos family initially relocated after the pastor's death to Zamboanga City, approximately 160 km away, but have recently returned to Jolo. The church has temporarily joined with another congregation, but plans to reopen.

Open Doors Philippines reported that only a few days before his death, Bagtasos had confided to a friend, "If I am killed, so be it. I am ready to die for Jesus. But if I have to be killed, I would prefer to die in the church, doing the Lord's work.

The murder is still under investigation by local authorities.

Christians in Somalia face increased pressure

MOGADISHU, Somalia (Compass Direct) — For the estimated 700 Christians in Somalia life is becoming increasingly difficult. Relief organizations are being blamed for spreading Christianity and bringing Christian literature into the country, resulting in widespread attacks on Christianity in Somali newspapers.

One front page newspaper article from the *Quaran Press* featured the drawing of a book labelled *Kitaabka Quduuska* (Holy Bible) with the warning: "Iska Jir" (Beware/Avoid). One portion of the article read: "Christian books written in the Somali language arrived in Mogadishu. They are called *Axdiga Cusub* — the New Testament. This is the kind which is broadcast through FEBA Radio from the Seychelles Islands and is meant for misleading the Somali people."

A report released by Sheik Axmed Khamiis, leader of the Islamic Party, says some Christian organizations are flooding the country with Christian literature. He warned the people to stay away from it.

In November 1995, *Wargeyska Dadka* (The People's Paper) reported: "Wherever the Muslim Somali people live, they must wake up for the traps set for them. It will shift them from their religious foundations, resulting in them becoming like livestock which are just led along. The main danger at this period in time is that they do not have any power to resist the danger of the spread of Christianity (infidelism)."

Gunman takes hostages at Focus on the Family

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (EP) — A construction worker who was injured while helping to build the headquarters of Focus on the Family took hostages at the ministry May 2. Kerry Steven Dore, who had a handgun and claimed to have explosives strapped to his chest, held four people hostage for almost two hours.

Four hours after releasing the hostages he gave himself up to police, just before a tactical enforcement team was ready to enter the building and forcibly end the standoff.

According to Colorado Springs Police Chief Lorne Kramer, Dore, 42, had a 9mm semi-automatic handgun and a flare gun, but no explosives.

Laurilee Keyes, who was one of the hostages, described Dore as a profane, and said he kept cocking and uncocking his gun. "He was angry. He wanted everybody out of the building, and said nothing would happen to us if we didn't try anything smart," Keyes told Dobson later on the ministry's syndicated radio program.

A cry for help

Dore entered the headquarters at about 1:30 p.m., released the hostages at about 3 p.m., and surrendered at about 7:15 p.m.

Dore, 42, was apparently injured while working for a subcontractor on the project in 1992, and felt he had not been adequately compensated by the Colorado Worker's Compensation Board. A statement released by Focus on the Family said Dore had reportedly received over $300,000 in medical and compensatory benefits.

About 500 people were in the administration building when Dore entered and began issuing orders. One of the men in the lobby told Dore that he could empty the building quickly by pulling the fire alarm, and Dore agreed to this — an action which also notified the police and fire departments.

Focus on the Family founder Dr. James Dobson was in Washington, D.C., at the time of the incident, to attend the presentation of the Congressional Gold Medal to the Rev. Billy Graham. Dobson explained later on his radio broadcast, "This was not aimed at me or Focus on the Family, it was just a cry for help."

Dobson added that the incident would not lead to major changes at the ministry. "We're a ministry that's there for the family. We're not going to put up barricades because of this," he insisted.

Focus on the Family was founded by Dobson to advance family and moral values. Its radio program is broadcast on more than 2,500 stations around the world and heard by an estimated five million North Americans per week.

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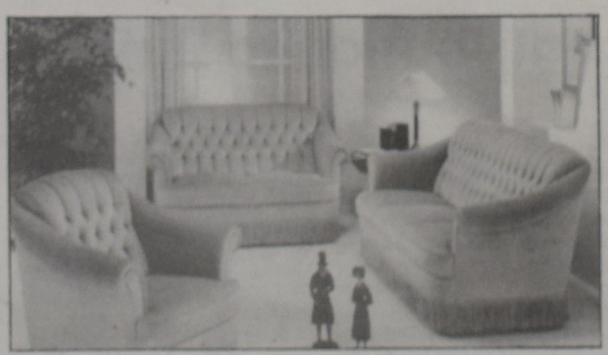

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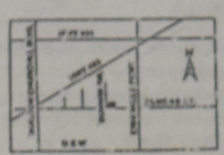

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Chapter & Verse

* Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
Al Wolters

Haunted, hunted, home

"You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone" (James 2:24).

Arthur Clutton-Brock was for many years the art critic for the *London Times*. He wrote about his Christian faith in *What Is the Kingdom of Heaven?*

As a child he was out for a walk with his sitter, traipsing along a country lane. At a house just before them three children were romping through the yard, playing games and laughing. They had climbed a small sycamore tree, gathering leaves and tossing them into the air. The tender branches from the top of the tree, covered now with blazing bronzed leaves, they had broken off and they carried them in a bundle like a bouquet of flowers.

When Arthur and his sitter passed by, the children ran out into the lane and danced about them. Then they presented the bouquet of branches to Arthur in a ceremony of great pomp. It was a magical moment of grace and beauty.

But whether from fear or from pride, Arthur refused the gift offered. He ran after his sitter, and when they were shortly down the path he turned round to look at the three. He saw them standing in the middle of the road, faces suddenly dark. The laughter was gone and all the pretty flowers they had made were spilled around them in the dust. Looking back, Clutton-Brock says, "I felt, in that moment, that I had turned my back on the Kingdom of God. Something had been offered to me in love, and I hadn't taken it!" He says that sight has haunted him all his life.

The Hound of Heaven?

The haunting of our lives is the gap between what we know to be significant and our own actions that betray days lived by secondary values and systems. A psychiatric textbook once carried this story of dissonance: A lad with a rather evil temperament had met with every act of discipline his parents and school could meet. Still he rebelled and worked his cruel schemes.

But one day, playing with the little dog he had recently come to enjoy, he tried to teach the puppy a new trick. The afternoon was hot, the dog tired, and the boy impatient. And when it failed to understand his commands, the lad lashed out with his foot, kicking the dog in the mouth till it bled. Puzzled and bewildered, it crawled back to him, its brown eyes questioning in love. One front leg was broken. Still it crawled its way to the boy's leg and reached up a shaking paw. With a bleeding nose it sniffed at his arm, and whimpered as it tried to lick his hand.

The boy broke. He jumped to his feet and ran to the house blinded by tears. Sobbing in fits he threw himself into his mother's arms, repeating over and over, "I have done an awful thing!" Like the Prodigal Son of Jesus' story in Luke 15, he was haunted back to his father.

And so it is with faith. The words we speak in testimony mean little until our feet carry us home. That's why James is so insistent on reading our faith by what we *do*. What we believe is written in a story penned anew each day. And the test of our relationship with God is not the bent of our theology, but the grace with which we receive flowers of the Kingdom, and the attitude we bear toward even the little puppies God has made to romp in it.

Wayne Brouwer is senior pastor at Harderwyk Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Mich.

London pastor criticized for saying Christ can free Muslims from darkness

Marian Van Til

LONDON, Ont. — A pastor who spoke to 3,000 people who took part in the March for Jesus last weekend has come under fire for urging the group to pray that Muslims will come to Christ. Rev. Miguel Sanchez of the London Gospel Temple asked the marchers to pray for the deliverance of the people of Saudi Arabia "from the darkness and deception of the spirit of Islam." He also asked that they pray that Christians in Saudi Arabia be protected from abuse and attacks from Muslims while preaching the gospel.

Sanchez was immediately criticized by Ab Chahbar, a Muslim and London board of education trustee, reports the *London Free Press*. Chahbar says there are 15,000 Muslims in the London area who would take issue with Sanchez's remarks. The boards of the London mosque and the Islamic Centre were to meet the next day to discuss the situation. Chahbar said Sanchez abused his position; he called the pastor's words "misinformated and inflamatory." He said Sanchez was spreading "religious hate, separation and intolerance."

Love for the lost

Canadian participants in the international March for Jesus were to pray specifically for Saudi Arabia, which, with its 98 per cent Muslim population, is among "the nations who are unchurched and unopen to the gospel of Jesus Christ," Sanchez said. "Our desire is that they all come to Jesus as their Lord and Savior." However, by Sunday night, the senior pastor of Sanchez's church, Rev. Robert Smith, had dissociated himself and the church from Sanchez's remarks. Smith said he talked with Sanchez; after their discussion, Smith said, Sanchez apologized to Chahbar.

Chahbar also criticized London mayor Dianne Huskett, who is an evangelical Christian, for appearing to join the prayer. She was seated on the platform from which Sanchez spoke because she had brought greetings to the marchers from the city. Huskett later called Sanchez's choice of words unfortunate, but she asserted that "from what I know of him, I believe Rev. Sanchez and all the other participants have a great love for all people, including their Muslim brothers and sisters."

Sanchez himself said his intent wasn't to be disrespectful to Saudis. The *London Free Press* quoted Sanchez as saying, "Jesus loves them and died for them. I can say with purity of heart that I don't have any bias towards anybody. But I believe no one can come to God except through Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Those without Jesus are in darkness."

'Little town' of Bethlehem looks to the year 2000

PARIS, France (EP) — The "little town" of Bethlehem will get a $2.26 million facelift before the 2,000th anniversary of the birth of Christ, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) announced last month. "The four-year project seeks to renovate the old city, restore its religious and historical monuments and highlights its contribution to civilization," UNESCO said in a statement.

The "Bethlehem 2000" program is one of 27 projects the group announced. The project will include a redesigned Square of the Nativity, a restored central market and a new bus station and car park. The project may be a little late, however — most Bible scholars agree that Jesus was actually born in the year 4 B.C., making 1996 the 2,000th anniversary of his birth.

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Feature

Twenty-one names

Jacoba Bos

A ray of sunlight reflected off the dresser mirror into Grace's face. She opened her eyes slowly, then realizing that the place beside her was empty, she quickly rose to ease the pain of loneliness inside her.

It was Sunday and her grandson was going to be baptized. Jacob John was the name his parents had chosen for him. *He's the first grandchild named after Jack and it's the first baptism Jack will miss,* Grace thought as she wrapped her housecoat around her slender body. Smokey the dog greeted her enthusiastically as she prepared breakfast in the sunny kitchen. "Are you a little lonesome?" she said more to herself than to the dog as she stroked his soft fur.

Through the big kitchen window Grace saw her oldest son walking from the barn to the house. He carried a milk pail in one hand. Cathy, his young daughter, was holding on to the other hand, her upturned face catching the sunshine. *She's likely asking a million questions,* Grace thought.

John is a picture of his dad, she mused as she turned on the hot water on the few dishes in the sink. He had the same broad shoulders and curly hair sticking out from under his barn hat.

She looked over the neat farmyard with the tall silos and well-kept buildings. The name Jacob Vanderloon and Sons stood out in big white letters on the red barn. She and Jack had built up the farm together, often putting in long days, especially during harvest and haying season. Grace smiled as she remembered her first attempt at milking a cow. She got more milk on herself than in the pail. But it wasn't very long until she was as fast as Jack was in this twice daily chore.

When their second child was born Jack had bought the milking machine. "Now I don't have to rush through chores anymore before consistory meetings," Jack had said when he modernized the barn with the new equipment. "And you can stay in the house now, Grace," he added.

Grace turned on the radio to the Back To God Hour. It was a Sunday morning tradition they had kept since the days of Rev. Eldersveld when every broadcast ended with the singing of "By the Sea of Crystal." She hummed the tune softly, somewhat nostalgic for the days when things were simpler and the difference between the world and the church was clearly defined.

Grace moved to the bathroom to put on her make-up. She smiled as she remembered the debate which developed in the church papers over whether or not it was sinful for women and girls to wear lipstick.

Jack and Grace had often marvelled together over the years at the multitude of blessings they received. Five healthy children, a prosperous farm, and later the arrival of grandchildren. Everything was going well for them until.... The memory of the dreadful spring day when the tractor overturned in the field, pinning Jack beneath it, caused Grace to wince in painful recollection.

"Lord, why did you have to take Jack?" she had cried out when she received the news that her husband of 30 years had died as a result of the injuries. Grace still struggled with that question as she grieved over the loss of the man she loved.

Jack's accident happened shortly after they moved into the house they would retire in, built for them on the home place. Their son John and his wife Marie with their four lively youngsters had moved into the large old farmhouse, taking over the full responsibility of the farm.

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The voice of the radio announcer jarred Grace back to reality. Nine o'clock already. Church would start at 10 and the pews always filled up quickly. She finished dressing and hurried outside to her compact car. Her drive to church would take her through the peaceful countryside where golden wheat fields stood waiting for rumbling combines and lush green pasture fields provided a cool place for contentedly grazing cattle.

Grace savored the tranquillity, remembering how different it was when she and her family had made this same trip week after week; when hair-brushing, tie-straightening, shoe-tying and dispute-settling often was done in the family car on the way to church.

"Would you like to sit close to John and Marie?" the usher asked as he led her to a seat directly behind them. Baby Jack was sound asleep in his mother's arms, unaware of the important event about to take place. Four-year-old Cathy was on her knees on the pew beside her dad, facing backwards.

"Hi, Grandma see my purse?" Cathy beamed. Grace smiled as her thoughts raced back to the time when her daughters were little girls in Sunday dresses carrying little purses with offering money and peppermints.

The church building was soon full, and as the jubilant strains of "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing," resounded through the sanctuary, Grace felt an overwhelming sense of awe and thankfulness. *We've worried so much and so needlessly,* Grace thought as she silently thanked God for his faithfulness in holding his church in his hands.

"God will build his church," Jack had said many times during Sunday evening visits with friends. "The CRC may be going through hard times, but if we stay faithful to the Bible we will overcome." Jack had loved the church dearly and served it zealously.

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"Jacob John Vanderloon I baptize you..."; the familiar words brought Grace back to the ceremony. *Forgive my wandering thoughts, Lord,* she prayed silently as she rose with the congregation to sing about God's unchanging love, John smiled at his mother as he gently returned the baby to his wife's arms, his big work hands carefully smoothing the blue ribbon on the baptismal gown.

Through tears Grace smiled back. This was the tenth time she'd witnessed the baptism of a grandchild, and each time it deeply moved her. To know that this small child belonged to her heavenly Father filled her with immense joy and comfort.

Later that day all the Vanderloons gathered in John and Marie's farm kitchen for Sunday dinner. "Will you have some chicken soup, Mom? 'It's almost as good as yours,' Dad always said." Marie stopped abruptly as if she had said something wrong.

"It's all right, Marie," Grace said softly as she tied Cathy's bib around her unco-operative neck, "I find myself thinking about Dad a lot these days. He loved all of you so much; he was proud of his family. I just miss him so much on special days like today with the baptism and all...." Her voice trailed away.

"Grandma, I was bat — baptized too," Cathy reminded her grandmother, nearly tripping over the big word — "A loooong time ago." She stretched out her chubby arms to indicate the time span. "You know why? 'Cause Jesus said Cathy is his," she announced proudly. She concluded her statement while licking her soup bowl to get the last of the slippery noodles out.

It was eight-year-old Nathan's turn to lead in prayer. In his childlike way he thanked God for baptism, Grandma and chicken soup. "And we thank

Continued on page 11 ...

Feature

The best time of all

CC PUBS

Jim Miller

One irony of life is that we often neglect those things which provide us the greatest benefit and substitute for them things of lesser value. Why is that? This irony is quickly brought home when we reflect on our relationship with God. Most of us would agree that our greatest inspiration and strength comes from our times we have alone with God. But for one reason or another, we neglect this most crucial facet of our walk with God and, in a sense, trade in our strength for weakness and our victory for defeat.

I would like to lay out a few of the responses a Sunday school class gave to the question: "What are some of the benefits for spending time alone with God?" See if your heart doesn't resonate with their comments.

*It provides me with an inner strength that equips me to handle the pressures of the day.

*It enables me to get along better with those around me.

*I gain new insights into who God is.

It's obvious that this arena of Christian living is the most crucial in our development. The problem is that we never seem to be consistent with it. We allow the demanding, daily pressures of life to squeeze out the most dynamic element of our lives.

Most of us ebb and flow in this discipline of careful Scripture reading and prayer. Every now and then I find myself returning to the goal with renewed vigor. I am consistently successful in setting aside this time for about two weeks and then I fall prey to the tyranny of what I think is "urgent." I suspect others do the same. Obviously, this is not our intent, but it becomes our plight nevertheless.

Should we then shrug our shoulders and plead that this will be our destiny as long as we're on earth "Never!" would be the cry of the examples of ages past. We should resolve to reconcile this issue with speed and discipline so that we can know more of our God.

The Bible speaks of "seeking" God. Charles Swindoll says, "Every waking moment of our lives we operate from one of two viewpoints: human or divine. The more popular of the two is human, and the more fruitful of the two is divine." We must seek God's strength as the only choice over our natural inclination to rely on our own abilities, however impotent they may be. So when our weekly schedule is full of assignments, instead of yielding to the temptation to work on that "list" every moment, try setting aside a few minutes each day to seek strength from the ultimate power source. Instead of using the human might of a squirt gun, try using the thermonuclear energy from the divine reservoir.

Time with God is never lost. God is faithful and will always reward those who earnestly seek him

The well is never dry

Another helpful thought about seeking God is that Scripture informs us whenever we dig in this well, we will always find water. Deuteronomy 4:29 encourages, "But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul." God is eager for us to spend time with him — by and large, because he has so much he wants to share with his children. If we keep in mind that God is waiting for us to take our step in his direction, we will most assuredly find him running in our direction. It would probably surprise most of us greatly if we knew just how little effort is really involved in finding God.

To set aside a time out for our so-called "hectic schedules" is to enter the Holy of Holies and intercede as a priest for those in need. To come before his throne of grace is to put on the whole armor of God and sharpen the blade of your sword. To sit at the feet of the Master is to hear the mysteries of the world unfold; and to rest your weary head on his chest is to receive the greatest solace anyone can find. Time with God is never lost. God is faithful and will always reward those who earnestly seek him (Heb. 11:6). If you take an hour out of your day and give it sacrificially to God, God will more than make up for your "lost time." God can increase our productivity in ways we have never imagined. He can germinate creativity, inject energy into projects and foster a peaceful environment in which to work. He can and he will if you will ask him.

Is it worth it to sacrifice time and energy seeking God? Obviously it is! Is it practical? Test God in these matters and see if he will not flood your schedules with so much time and your bodies with so much energy that you will have to take a vacation due to the surplus.

If you listen, you can hear it — the still small voice of the Spirit beckoning your name, calling you to invest your time and your self in the Almighty. The challenge is before you. Take it and you will not be sorry.

Jim Miller is the assistant pastor of Kenney Memorial Wesleyan Church in Athens, Ohio.

Twenty-one names

... *continued from page 10*

you, Lord, that you know all our names," he added.

+ + +

"Why don't you have a rest, Mom, you do look tired," Marie said to her mother-in-law as the two women were alone in he kitchen after dinner. Gratefully Grace accepted. In the family room she sank into an easy chair and quickly dozed off.

A gentle touch on her arm awoke her. "Grandma, what's your favorite color?" Nathan stood in front of her, his shirt covered with crayon marks, his eyes intent on her. "I'm making somethin', Grandma, and I have to know what your favorite color is."

"Blue," Grace answered without hesitation, and Nathan returned to the table which was covered with clippings, crayons, scissors and tape.

The sound of piano music drifted through the air then and Grace hummed the familiar tune contentedly.

"Grandma, here's your present!" Red-cheeked and with eyes aglow, Nathan thrust a large handmade envelope into her lap. "I made it all by myself," he beamed. Gingerly, Grace removed a red and green tape and opened the envelope. "NAMES OF THE VANDERLOON FAMILY" was printed in bold letters on a hand-crafted book held together with tape and glue. Grace turned the pages carefully. Each name was printed in colorful letters. Grace Vanderloon was in big blue letters and the page was decorated with pictures of flowers and pots and pans.

"See, that's what you like, right, Grandma?" He looked up to her expectantly.

"Yes, that's right, Nathan. I do like flowers and I love to cook." She paged through the book. There was Nathan's mother's name, Marie. A piano showed her love for music. Nathan's Aunt Nancy's hobby was pictured by a sewing machine. Uncle Jim's page was adorned with a fishing rod, and John, Nathan's father's name was beside a picture of a big cow. Grace counted the pages. Twenty one pages. Twenty one names.

"This is beautiful, Nathan. It's like a family album. But aren't you forgetting one person? What about Grandpa?"

"Grandpa lives in heaven now," Nathan said simply. "My Mom says that God gave him a new name and he's always happy now." Then the need for an answer to a question prompted him to crawl onto Grace's lap.

"Grandma, are there other churches in heaven?"

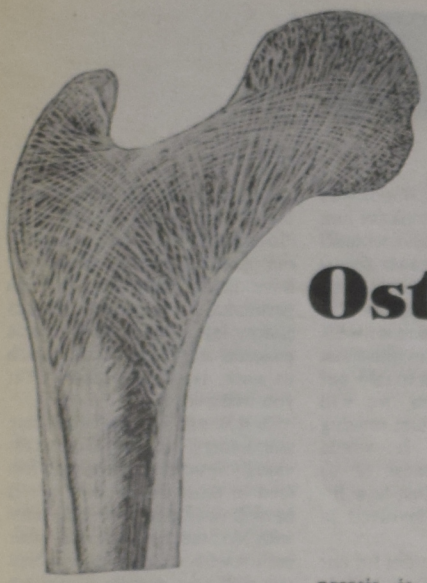
"What do you mean, Nathan?" she asked.

"Well, like Kenny, he goes to another church because his dad says that our church is not strict enough. Are there strict churches in heaven, Grandma?" His brown eyes searched her intently.

Grace thought for a moment, then answered softly, "No, Nathan there will be no strict church there. In fact there will be no church in heaven at all. In heaven there will only be people who loved Jesus here on earth. And they will only be concerned with loving him."

Jacoba Bos lives in Strathroy, Ont.

Feature



The silent thief: Osteoporosis:

Gertie Pool

There is so much to be learned when it comes to keeping your body, as the "temple of the Holy Spirit" in the best possible health condition. This became very clear to me when a few weeks ago I visited British Columbia's Woman's Hospital and Health Centre in Vancouver. I came to see first hand how deeply concerned the medical profession is about a degenerative bone disease affecting one in four women today.

The bone thinning disease named osteoporosis is called the "silent thief" simply because bone loss occurs over a long period of time without obvious pain — until a fracture occurs, most often in the hip, spine or wrist. Records show that 90 per cent of all hip fractures are osteoporosis related.

However, the main area for concern remains with the fact that one in four women over 50, and one in two over 70, will develop this disease. The condition affects two and a half million Canadians, mostly women. And 89 per cent of those women are seniors.

After age 35, the average woman loses up to one per cent of her bone mass per year. That figure rises to five per cent a year after menopause. That's because estrogen, which slows down the bone loss, is no longer produced.

Nonetheless, the members of the hard-working health team at the B.C. Women's Osteoporosis Clinic, directed by Dr. David Kendler, are pleased with the excellent progress that has been made with modern diagnostic equipment, research and new medications now available to help combat this growing health concern.

"Every woman should become aware of the risk factors and take early preventative measures. Here at B.C. Women's we help people attain the skills to prevent osteoporosis or to manage the condition," says Lenore Riddell, nurse/co-ordinator of the osteo program.

"Our program helps women and men assess their risk or degree of osteoporosis by identifying risk factors and through on-site bone density testing. A team of physicians, nurses, nutritionists and physiotherapists provide education, treatment and prevention options."

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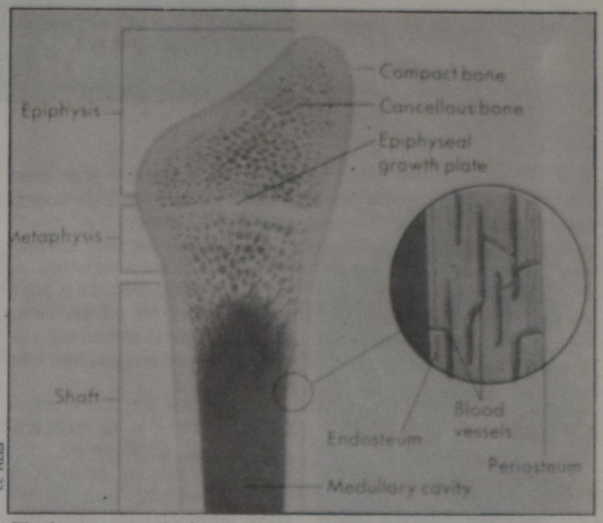
Medical students study anatomy and bone structure



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The basic parts of a bone

Preventable suffering

Osteoporosis can be prevented in many situations. The most effective means are a nutritious diet rich in calcium, sensible weight-bearing exercise, and hormone or other drug treatment. Lifestyle changes when you're in your 20s and 30s can help ward off the disease.

"The higher bone density you have when you're middle aged, the less chance you'll have of developing fractures later in life," says Riddell.

The clinic's dietitian, Donna Forsyth, focuses on a good diet for the management of osteoporosis. "The fact that 99 per cent of the calcium in our bodies is found in our bones makes adequate dietary intake an absolute must," Forsyth says.

"If women are unable to get sufficient calcium and vitamin D from their daily food plan, they may need to consider supplementing their diet with calcium and vitamin D. However, with so many different kinds of calcium supplements available today it can be confusing as to which one to buy," she adds.

Calcium the key

There are two main kinds of calcium tablets: calcium carbonate and calcium citrate. Calcium carbonate has the most calcium per tablet or weight — 40 per cent. Calcium citrate contains 25 per cent calcium, 20 per cent lactose and 10 per cent gluconate per tablet.

"When selecting calcium supplements choose one that has the right amount and fits your budget. If you have trouble swallowing tablets look for chewables, syrups or dissolvable tablets. Three common and reasonably priced brand names are Tums, Cal'chew and a calcium citrate called Citricol," Forsyth explains.

"Another important aspect of a woman's diet is Vitamin D. The D vitamin is helpful for calcium absorption. I recommend women check with a dietician to determine how much is needed for their particular age," says Forsyth. "You can learn about the list of food sources by calling Dial-A-Dietician, a free nutrition hotline at 1-800-667-3438, regarding these concerns," she says.

Lenore Riddell explains how with modern technology and new medications over 50 per cent of all cases are preventable and almost all cases are treatable.

"Some doctors recommend that all women entering menopause consider using hormone replacement therapy. However, there are risks to taking HRT that must be weighed against the benefits," Riddell says. "It is important that women make this decision with the consultation of a physician after becoming informed as to the potential risks and benefits.".

The Vancouver Hospital Bone and Mineral Centre has ongoing research investigating new drugs for the treatment of osteoporosis. A new class of drugs called bisphosphonates are being studied. They have the potential to stop calcium loss from bones. The first of these drugs will be released within a year.

Costly and painful problem

The national cost of treating the 90 per cent of hip fractures which are osteoporosis-related exceeds $400 million annually. It is estimated that by the year 2010 the national cost of osteoporosis could be $1 billion annually because of our aging population.

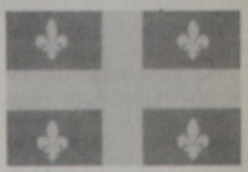
If you already have osteoporosis or wish more information on the osteoporosis program call (604) 875-2786.

Gertie Pool works in a senior citizen's home in Abbotsford, B.C.

Feature

Quo vadis Canada?

The national unity question



Anthony J. Looy

For the last 30 years or so, Canada's national agenda has been dominated by Quebec's demands for more autonomy and even for outright independence. Since Meech Lake (1987) and the Quebec referendum (1995), we seem to be moving, confused, in a constitutional void and political fog.

One solution to our constitutional wrangling is, of course, to let Quebec separate and to negotiate an economic union between Quebec and the rest of Canada.

Those who favor Quebec sovereignty have pointed out that, historically speaking, it is probably true that sovereignty becomes inevitable once 50 per cent or so of a given population who live together and speak the same language insist on independence. In such a situation, historical, economic and constitutional arguments about keeping the country together are seldom effective.

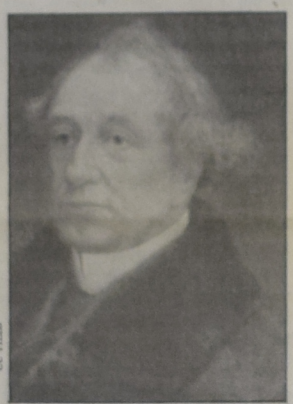
Psychologically already gone

Those who support Quebec sovereignty also point out that French-speaking Quebec has never been an integral part of Canada except in a purely constitutional and legal sense. Its heart and soul have never belonged to Canada. Psychologically the separatists have left Canada a long time ago.

Since Confederation the province of Quebec has been "an essentially French entity," with the exception of its English-speaking minority and its allophones. Nor is Quebec interested in being a part of a multi-ethnic state which cherishes its diversities as Canada does. Quebec's nationalism or ethnicity is narrowly based on what some have described as a tribal identity. René Lévesques once reminded us that it is not enough to speak French — one must *be* French!

Nor is it enough to remind the separatists that within Canada Quebec has gained constitutional guarantees to protect French culture and language. Many a federalist has sighed in frustration: "What does Quebec want?" The answer is simple, according to Elie Kedourie, a British professor who helped shape Trudeau's strong views on the evils of nationalism:

"Nationalists consider that political and cultural matters are inseparable, and that no culture can live if it is not endowed with a sovereignty exclusively its own."



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Sir John A. Macdonald

The same has been aptly paraphrased by Canadian political scientist Bryan Schwartz, who believes that Quebec has prospered, economically and culturally, under our evolving constitutional arrangements. He concludes: "If the Québécois wish to separate, it is first and foremost because they have a sense of nationalism *as Quebecois* [emphasis mine] and will wish to affirmatively express that in a state of their own."

Finally, another argument on behalf of Quebec independence is that French-Canadian separatism is not like a case of the measles. Separatism will never go away. Yet, notwithstanding the above arguments, many Canadians believe that there is still a reasonable hope that Canada will remain together and will include Quebec!

A better solution

Our first prime minister, John A. Macdonald, once said that Confederation was "carpentered together." Now, some 130 years later, the time has come for a thorough renovation of our Canada. The country needs to re-confederate and to adopt asymmetrical federalism.

The first requirement for asymmetrical federalism would be to constitutionally accept Quebec as a distinct society. The second aspect of this new federalism would be a devolution of some federal powers to the provinces.

The third condition would be to accept the premise that not all provinces need the same powers. For example, British Columbia may wish to control the Western fisheries as well as its minerals. The Maritime regions similarly may want to control the Eastern fisheries. Quebec undoubtedly is interested in powers that relate to its culture and language, such as employment and immigration. In other words, a re-distribution of powers and a certain inequality among the various powers becomes essential. We ought to strive towards a rough equality. At the same time, we need a kind of equality that is flexible and practical. "Equal" does not mean "the same."

Nationalism causes wars

We must reject Quebec's sovereignty and recognize that nationalism is a secular ideology. History is littered with examples of nationalism as the cause of wars, rumors of war, and countless injustices and suffering. As far as the separatists' aspirations go, the unique culture and French language are probably much more secure in a united Canada than in a sovereign Quebec fortress with a siege mentality. Considering the constant erosion caused by both globalism and Americanization, it will be risky to seek refuge in an independent Quebec.

We also need to battle with the idolatry of "perfect equality" which is so dear to some Western provinces, as well as to the Reform party. In the history of Canadian politics and provincial powers there has never been such a thing. We've imported concepts like populism (instead of a parliamentary democracy) and equality from the U.S. and those influences have not served us well.

Reject idolatries

We need a Canada that is not narrowly construed as a *nationalist* country but as a nation-state that cherishes and protects diversity and minority rights. We need to restructure Canada fundamentally, as Judge Berger has been advocating. We need to accommodate the historical and *de facto* special status of Quebec by incorporating the concept of distinct society in our constitution.

Let us reject a re-drawing of *English-speaking* Canada and an independent Quebec as if our country were a blueprint that can be torn up and redrawn time and again. In this respect Canadian Christians, irrespective of their political bias, ought to be reminded of the principal opposition to the French Revolution of 1789 by men like Edmund Burke and Groen Van Prinsterer. Perhaps this is not a perfect analogy, but there are worrisome similarities.

We also need to reject idolatries like "equality" and "nationalism," recognizing them as secular concepts, and return to Christ-like values like justice, stewardship and servanthood. These truths don't only apply to our personal lives. They are equally valid as guidelines and directives for communities, societies and even countries.

Anthony Looy holds a PhD in history and is a former school principal. He lives in Edmonton.

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Agriculture

Provincial budget seen as mixed blessing by Ontario Christian farmers

TORONTO (CFFO) — Ontario's new budget received mixed reviews from Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario representatives as a total expenditure of $425 million for 1996-1997 was announced for the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA).

Elbert van Donkersgoed

"It's encouraging to see good support for agriculture in the budget," Elbert van Donkersgoed, CFFO research and policy director said in an interview after Finance Minister Ernie Eves read his budget speech in the legislature. "But some of the choices being made will raise eyebrows among CFFO members."

"On the plus side, there is a continued commitment to the Farm Property Tax Rebate until municipal property taxes are reformed," van Donkersgoed said. "And it sounds like they are very serious about the municipal property tax reform."

"I only hope that reform means lower property taxes," van Donkersgoed said. "Property is not as important to business and wealth generation as it was in the past, but it is carrying a tax burden as if it was just as important as decades ago. This is not just true for agriculture but the whole business community in rural Ontario."

Want long-term solution

Agriculture will be able to make good use of two new initiatives that are being proposed, the Grow Ontario program worth $15 million and a retail sales tax "holiday" for building materials, according to van Donkersgoed.

"The provincial government has obviously been listening to the message that agriculture is the key to economic development in rural Ontario," van Donkersgoed said. "But will these programs give farming a boost that will make a real difference in the long-term?"

"Most CFFO members will make good use of the programs but will be sceptical about the long-term benefits," van Donkersgoed said. "During this past winter CFFO held a series of 19 think tanks on redesigning OMAFRA's budget in various communities across the province. Those workshops made it clear to us that family farm entrepreneurs ranked maintaining the long-term infrastructure of agriculture far above programs that resulted in cheques coming directly to farm mail boxes in the short-term."

"Only a matter of a few weeks ago OMAFRA announced major cuts to its budget for research, education and laboratories. These parts of OMAFRA's infrastructure were rated very imported by our members," van Donkersgoed said. "Our members will question cuts to basic infrastructure in order to create another program that sends cheques to their mail boxes."

On the broader directions set by the budget, van Donkersgoed expects that CFFO members will be pleased with the new initiatives being taken by this government, with a few exceptions.

"We are fans of eliminating paper work for businesses. Exempting small and medium businesses from the employer health payroll tax is the right thing to do," van Donkersgoed said. "We also support strongly the need to get the deficit under control. There were quite a few voices in our think tank sessions this past winter who suggested that they would gladly accept fewer subsidies if they were guaranteed that the savings would be used for deficit reduction."

"We are not fans of casinos and video gambling and raising government funds by licensing these establishments," van Donkersgoed said. "If an initiative is clearly in the public interest and the government needs to raise money for it we would rather pay more taxes than encourage yet more gambling in our province."

"The tax cut is not something for which CFFO members have been clamoring," van Donkersgoed said. "But a promise made should be a promise kept, and if it results in more user pay or fees elsewhere in the economy that's OK. We support the direction of making the various parts of the economy more self-reliant."

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COUNTRY COUNTERCULTURE

VERN M. GLEDDIE

A skipping lamb is a delight to the Lord

Vern M. Gleddie

It came to pass one spring when my daughter's life had spanned a decade, that she besought me for a lamb to have for her very own. I answered my daughter, "Behold, only this morning a lamb hath been orphaned and it is thine if thou wilt faithfully care for it."

And thus she did. And the lamb followed her wherever she did go, yea, even through the house, sliding across the floor, skipping over furniture and leaving tell-tale tokens of its presence which was unto the mother of my daughter a sore displeasure.

Having attached itself to the young maiden, the lamb eschewed the company of sheep. Indeed, it assayed to join itself to the human race. When it would perchance lose sight of its adopted mother, the lamb would set to such a bleating as to prick up the ears of every coyote within an hour's journey.

As the lamb grew in stature and knowledge it had the lesser need of milk from a bottle and went further and further afield for succulent browse (but always near the abode of its gentle guardian): a morsel of Kentucky Blue from the lawn; some maple leaves from the windbreak; perchance a petunia from the flower garden; but pea plants were the most preferred.

Behold, one day as I spake with a neighbor in the driveway where he had parked his wagon and 90 horses, the little lamb did traverse the driveway, heading for a treat from the garden. As he proceeded, his pace did quicken. When the peas hove in sight the little fellow did betake himself in the most joyful expression of thankfulness, with stiff-legged skipping and side-hopping up to his place of feasting.

Pleasure source

Now then, such manifest joy of anticipation bestowed upon a creature by its Maker has given unto me pause for thought. Is it not an indication of the value the Lord God puts upon his creation? And does it not show something of what gives our Maker pleasure? God delights in what he has made, and he also giveth his creatures joy. The Lord God's pleasure is wider than our meagre comprehension — he created the giraffe, the duck-billed platypus, and you and me; and which is the more odd or interesting or amusing, I cannot say.

From the beginning we have been delivered of the responsibility to be no less than keepers of his creation, even though we are prone to ruin. The Lord Jesus Christ maketh all things new and enlists us as his servants, affirming unto us the task first given unto Adam.

This day I write to the converted. But if, perchance, thou are in need of rededication, accept that there is no higher calling than to care for what God hath made. Let us agree to do that together, which is also what God intends, joining the varied gifts which God hath imparted to us.

How long since thou hast marvelled at the skipping of a lamb, the skilful play of a cat, the swaying grace of a tree, the sweet song of a bird in praise of their Creator? Yea, how long since thou thyself hath skipped for joy?

(With apologies to the author of The Millionaire and the Scrublady.)

Vern M. Gleddie is a sheep rancher near Edmonton.

In praise of irrelevant preaching

John A. Tamming

Best to 'fess up. The title is not mine. It is borrowed from an article in the old *Reformed Journal*. I forgot the contents of the article. But the title stuck. And remains relevant.

Increasingly, sermons are being constructed along the lines of the movies. There is the gripping opening (perhaps a reference to some recent disaster — Bosnia, Oklahoma City, the Maple Leafs), the softly meandering inner narrative (sprinkled liberally in *Reader's Digest* style with real-life dramas), and the closing exhortation to the audience to let us, therefore, (pick one): (a) forgive each other; (b) treat each other better; or (c) set up a Christian political party.

In the Christian Reformed Church as elsewhere, perceptions trail reality. Persons continue to perceive Reformed churches as replete with dogma, stale sermons and an intellectual approach to the faith. The church so described has not existed since this writer was peering ahead over the pews in Strathroy East CRC counting organ pipes. I don't know about you, but given recent trends in our churches I would give anything for dogma, stale sermons and an intellectual approach to the faith.

A little bit of care

I recall in seminary listening to those who returned from their year-long internships in Chicago or the West Coast. Many would hold forth about how in the real church world seminary stuff doesn't matter, how they never cracked open their Greek Bibles, how the parishioners just want someone to care, to listen, to strum a guitar and, presumably, to set up inner-city basketball teams. Such seminarians may accomplish many things in life, but a solid contribution to Reformed preaching is not one of them.

Consider: When was the last time you were lost in a sermon? I don't recall, though I would welcome the experience. The sermon today is too utterly transparent, the ideas exceedingly simple.

Even the slightest attempt to delve into the text or a doctrine with both hands is done with an air of apology ("Just a few details that we need to find out. Stay with me, it won't take long," comes the soothing voice, "soon it will all be over with, we'll be out of the dentist's chair, back into the pew and back into your day-to-day life with some helpful hints from Proverbs on how to handle your little delinquent or how to add color to your faded marriage.").

Time to ruminate

I believe it was the great preacher Harry Emerson Fosdick who warned his students against obscure preaching with these words: "Remember — no one gets up on Sunday morning thinking, 'Gee, I wonder whatever became of those Hittites?'" Well, point taken, and likely point needed for seminarians 50 years ago who drafted tedious monstrosities of sermons complete with references to "Point 1B (c) (ii)" of their text.

But one suspects that many attend today hoping that for just one Sunday the sermon won't attempt to speak to the lonely, struggling parishioner. One suspects even the lonely, struggling parishioner wishes the sermon would cut him or her some slack and ruminate for a while, not on her life, but rather, on Paul's development of Christ's ethics, on the Talmudic influences on Matthew — heck, on the fate of those Hittites.

John Tamming is a lawyer in Meaford, Ont., and a member of the First Christian Reformed Church of Owen Sound, Ont.

Reflections on facing death in Burundi

Suzy Yoder

BUJUMBURA, Burundi — Although Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) clearly stated the risks of service in Burundi, I didn't want to believe that part of my job would be to daily face the possibility of death. Yet this personal awareness of dying gives emotional reality to our ability to support Burundians who face the possibility of their deaths or their family's. The massacres in the hills and the stories people tell reveal suffering beyond any I have endured.

With the Burundian government displeased with the international community for calling for dialogue among all sides, international Christian aid workers have to face that we may not be welcome here much longer. The messages are mixed: sometimes we are accused of siding with Hutus, sometimes with the Tutsis. Sometimes Burundians condemn us for supporting negotiations; other times they commend us for our support of groups working for peace and reconciliation.

Even though people don't glare at us in the streets, and usually greet us in a friendly manner, death is on my mind. We may not be targets, but we could be killed in a crossfire or in an ambushed vehicle. I don't think it is morbid to face the possibility of death; in fact, this working through the possibility of death may be an important way I have been changed by serving in Burundi. Facing the threat of death can inspire us to evaluate our relationships, decisions and activities.

Thoughts of death come daily but the fears are usually short-lived. Once when a grenade exploded in the street, my first reaction was an adrenaline rush. Then I looked around, listened for more and noted, "I am still alive." Soon I was able to move on to other things, as Burundians do. After an attack, it is amazing how quickly people begin going to the market, walking to work, taking the minibus to the city — just as though nothing horrible has happened.

'Delivered out' or 'delivered up'

What thoughts sustain me here in a tense war-torn country where I have glimpsed death too often for comfort? Karl Johnson, a missionary in Burundi for 40 years, was advising us how to cope in a violent crisis. He said he is helped by remembering one of two things will happen: "Either I will be delivered out (evacuated, or rescued) or I will be delivered up (taken to heaven)."

As I was accompanying a young Burundian Roman Catholic student who didn't feel safe walking alone, she explained her approach to coping with the threat of death. "When my heart is pure and my relationship to God and other human beings is right, then I am OK. I feel more confident and I am at peace about whatever happens to me. When I can maintain that attitude, I am even ready to die. Whether I live or die doesn't really matter."

When confronted with violent death, I want to believe God will be with me. I will try my best to escape death because I love life and find the world full of interesting people and places and I still love to learn and want to alleviate pain wherever I can. I can count on my human instincts when it comes to my trying really hard to live.

There are miraculous stories of people receiving God's protection, which I do ask for. But I realize I cannot order God around and as God "loans me more life," as Burundians like to say, I am deeply grateful. People do pray for protection and are not granted it. I have told my husband that if I die here and he is still alive, I want to be buried in Burundi in solidarity with Christians here who have seen too much violent death.

When I was young I remember wanting the Lord to delay his return so I could experience life on earth for a while. Now I beg for his return to end all this suffering.

Suzy Yoder of Davidson, N.C., works for Mennonite Central Committee in Burundi and is affiliated with Davidson Friends Meeting and Oakhill Mennonite Church in Winston-Salem, N.C.

Terror continues to grip Burundi's capital

BUJUMBURA, Burundi (MCC) — Terror continues to grip Burundi's capital. Tutsis fear rebels will attack the city; the few Hutus left in the city are frightened they will be slaughtered by the Tutsi militia and army if a rebel attack takes place. The prime minister and others have called for arming the civilian population, which in Bujumbura is mostly Tutsi.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) asks for prayers for its five workers in Burundi, for other Christian aid workers and for the people of Burundi, particularly Christian leaders who feel they may be targets because of their ethnicity or activities in working for reconciliation and peace. Two leaders of local partner agencies recently asked MCC workers to look after their families if they are killed.

In early May heavy shooting filled the capital, lasting most of one night. Rumors abound. "People express much confusion about what is going on, and consequently, we find it difficult to know the truth," observed Lauren Yoder. He and his wife, Suzy, serve as MCC Burundi country representatives. They are from Davidson, North Carolina.

"We may not be targets, but we could be killed in crossfire or by being in a vehicle that is ambushed," said Suzy.

"The confusion, the lies, the atrocities do wear us out," said Lauren. "There are overwhelming days when if we didn't let go and leave it to God, praying that God be the one to intervene, we would not be able to keep going."

But the Yoders say they find satisfaction in supporting groups that are working to bring people together.

Burundians are finding creative ways to protect themselves and their families. Since whole families have been massacred in the night, some disperse their children among various family members and friends so at least some may have a chance to survive. One man dresses as a woman to go to his office unrecognized. Others rotate where they spend the night. A Tutsi Roman Catholic bishop keeps an unpredictable schedule to evade becoming a target.

Classifieds

Classified Rates

(Revised February 1, 1995)

Births	$25.00
Marriages & Engagements	$40.00
Anniversaries	$45.00
2-column anniversaries	$90.00
Obituaries	$45.00
Notes of thanks	$35.00
Birthdays	$40.00

All other one-column classified advertisements: $15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is $15.00. Letter under file number $35.00 extra. Photos: $25.00 additional charge.

Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive

ATTENTION!

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.

b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is *not* acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.

c) Photographs sent by fax *are not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.

d) *Christian Courier* will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.

e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. *Christian Courier* reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of $15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).

NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS

We offer a one-year subscription for only $25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the *Christian Courier* and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose $25.00 and the couple's correct address.

Christian Courier
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
Phone: (905) 682-8311
Fax: (905) 682-8313

Marriages

BATTERINK/RAYMOND:

With thanks to God, Hank and Aly Batterink are pleased to announce the forthcoming marriage of their daughter

CINTHIA JUNE
to
JEFFREY DAVID

son of Joan Raymond and the late David Raymond. The wedding will take place, D.V., June 8, 1996, at Grace Chr. Ref. Church, Chatham, Ont.

Future address: 23 Barthe Street, Chatham, ON N7L 1T3

Marriages

GUILLAUME/MAXWELL:

Ann and Frank Guillaume of Thornhill, Ont., are pleased to announce the forthcoming marriage of their son

FRANCOIS MARCEL
to
KARLA JAYNE MAXWELL

daughter of Mrs. Jan Madigan and Mr. George Maxwell.

The ceremony will be held, D.V., on Saturday, June 29, 1996, at 3:30 p.m., at the Willowdale Chr. Ref. Church, 70 Hilda Avenue, North York, Ont.

The couple's address will be: 144 Horsham Avenue, North York, ON M2N 2A2

Birthdays

Congratulations to Tjitske Ellens on the occasion of her 100th birthday!

ELLENS:

TJITSKE ELLENS

celebrated her 100th birthday on June 4, 1996.

Her children and 42 grandchildren with 97 plus great-grandchildren will make a great "noise" unto the Lord for His faithfulness.

May the face of the Lord shine on her as her light grows dim.

Address: Marshall Gowland Manor, 1000 London Rd., Sarnia, ON N7S 1N7

Births

VANDERBURG-GOMEZ:

Roland and Loyda Vanderburg-Gomez and son Gabriel are deeply grateful to God for the safe birth of a daughter and sister

JESSICA JOHANNA

born at the Baptist Hospital in Managua, Nicaragua, on May 12, 1996, weighing 9 lb., 4 oz.

Proud grandparents are Mama Ana Ruth in Managua and Herman and Betty Vanderburg-Guillaume in Oshawa, Ont., plus aunts and uncles in Calgary, Alta.

To God be the glory, great things he has done.

Address: Nicabox 313, P.O. Box 02-5640, Miami, FL 33102-5640.

Births

BERGSMA:

With praise and thanksgiving to God, Peter and Janine (Boomsma) announce the birth of a son

ELLIOT PETER

born May 10, 1996, weighing 7 lbs. Grateful grandparents are George and Shirley Bergsma and Martin and Helen Boomsma of Georgetown, Ont.

Address: 214 Martin Street, Milton, ON L9T 2R6

Anniversaries

1946 June 14 1996

"The Lord will guide you always" (Isaiah 58:11a).

It is with great joy and thankfulness to God that we announce the 50th anniversary of our parents and grandparents

LEO and TENA BATTERINK
(nee FLUIT)

We thank God for their example of faith and trust in Him.

Congratulations and love from:

Mary & Ed Faber — Strathroy, Ont.
Heather, Tim, Ryan, Jonathan
Annette & Phil (Lugtigheid) Westra — Strathroy, Ont.
Ian, Leona
Len & Nienke (Roukema) — Duncan, B.C.
Marie, Jennifer, Josh, Kristin
Clarence & Jeri (Miedema) — Hamilton, Ont.
Melanie, Kyle

We invite all relatives and friends to an open house on Friday, June 14, 1996, from 8-10 p.m., at Hamilton District Chr. High School (corner of Hwy. 53 & Glancaster Rd.), Ancaster, Ont.

Home address: 726 West 5th St., Hamilton, ON L9C 3R4

1956 June 15 1996

It is with joy that we announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

MAX and GE HOFSTRA

We, as a family, pray for many more years of love and happiness to come.

Rob & Barb Abma
Scott, Lisa
Ted & Shirley VanTienhoven
Dawn, Mark, David, Laura, Carrie
Andy & Nancy Braak
Anthony, Matthew, Amanda, Michelle
John & Carolyn Hofstra

Address: Box 152, Rimbey, AB T0C 2J0

Anniversaries

Congratulations to Marinus and Rena Mol (nee Noordhof) on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary!

Chatham Ayton
1946 June 21 1996

MARINUS and RENA MOL
(nee NOORDHOF)

will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps.119:105).

Congratulations and much love from your children and grandchildren:

Nellie & Bob Lamb — Brampton, Ont.
Susan Janssen — Richmond Hill, Ont.
Lorraine & Leonard Van Harten — Campbellville, Ont.
Betty & Dick Bouwers — Wingham, Ont.
Janet & Ted Van Lingen — Brampton, Ont.
Mike & Marja Mol — Norval, Ont.
and 15 grandchildren.

"But you are a shield around me, O Lord; you bestow glory on me and lift up my head" (Ps.3:3).

Home address: R.R.#3, Ayton, ON N0G 1C0

Anniversaries

1971 June 4 1996

"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love" (1 John 4:7,8).

It is with great joy and thankfulness to God that we wish to announce the 25th wedding anniversary of our parents

JOHN and RENEE TEITSMA
(ELMERS)

We pray that God will bless you both with many years to come.

Love,
Leanne — Victoria, B.C.
Wendy — Grimsby, Ont.

All are welcome to come to the open house at Mountainview Chr. Ref. Church in Grimsby, Ont., on June 29, 1996, from 2-4:30 p.m.

Home address: 6 Nelles Rd. S., Grimsby, ON L3M 2Z2

Anniversaries

1956 June 15 1996

With thanksgiving to God, we joyfully announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

JOHN and SYLVIA DEVRIES
(nee ZANDSTRA)

Your love for each other, for all of us and for our heavenly Father has been a wonderful blessing for us. May He continue to keep you in His care. With love from your family:

Ray & Annette Bruneau — Brighton, Ont.
Jonathan, Stephen, Bryan
Art & Jacqueline DeVries — Brighton, Ont.
Shawn, Tamara, Dean, Karlye
Rick DeVries — Brighton, Ont.
Duncan & Cynthia White — Cambridge, Ont.
Geraldine DeVries & her fiance Troy Ward — Brighton, Ont.
Dan & Yvonne Dulmage — Colborne, Ont.

Home address: R.R. #7, Brighton, ON K0K 1H0

Classifieds

Anniversaries

1946 June 5 1996
With thanks to God, we announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents
BONNE and TINA DE BOER
We feel blessed to have experienced their love for each other and for us. Our prayer is that God will continue to bless them and keep them in His care.
Steve & Monica De Boer
Bradley, Amanda, Kevin
Hilly & Henry Poortinga
George & Cheryl (Jamié), Trina & Ken, Steve, Mark, Evan
Eric & Nancy De Boer
Benjamin, Daniel, Christopher, Richard
Home address: R.R. #3, St. Marys, ON N4X 1C6

1956 June 15 1996
It is with joy and thanksgiving that we celebrate the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and our Opa and Oma
GEORGE and GERDA VERSLOOT
(nee VANWOUDENBERG)
May God continue to bless you and keep you in His care. Congratulations and love from all of us:
Peter & Grace — Welland, Ont.
Ryan, Daniel, William, Amy
Margaret & Ellis — Keswick, N.B.
Adrian, Aaron
Yvonne & Andre — Millville, N.B.
Evelyn & Donald — Shubenacadie, N.S.
Nathan, Nicholas, Melissa, Lucas
George Jr. — Fredericton, N.B.
Arthur & Karen — Keswick, N.B.
Eric — Keswick, N.B.
An anniversary celebration with family and friends will be held at the Monsignor Boyd Family Center in Fredericton, D.V., on Saturday, June 22, 1996, at 7:30 p.m. A loving memory or shared experience would be the most treasured gift George and Gerda could receive.
Home address: 75 Tripp Road, R.R. #3, Mouth of Keswick, NB E0H 1N0

Employment Wanted

A university grad with 3+ years work experience is looking for employment opportunities with a small or medium sized company in the **Toronto/Hamilton area.** With an excellent work ethic and willingness to start at the bottom this is an excellent way to add value to your employee team. Future goals include management, graduate study and an interest in future partnership or part ownership. Relocation within Southern Ontario is an option.
For a resume or more information please refer to **File#2647, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.**

Obituaries

MR. WIEBE BOER
of Abbotsford, B.C., died April 27, 1996, at the age of 88.
He is survived by his wife Annie Nanninga Boer and predeceased by his first wife Ellie Veninga Boer.
He is also survived by four daughters:
Karen (Jake) Heikens — Maple Ridge, B.C.
Bouwiena (Tom) Wyatt — Kelowna, B.C.
Martha (Albert) Bosma — Victoria, B.C.
Ellie (Fred) Bosma — Matsqui, B.C.
and two stepdaughters:
Hermina (Martinus) Brink
Alma (Henry) Lanting
and six sons:
Dr. John (Frances) Boer — Nigeria
Jim (Wilma) Boer — Chilliwack, B.C.
Rev. H. Hendrik (Barbara) Boer — Honolulu, Hawaii
Bill Boer — Maple Ridge, B.C.
Tinus (Joanna) Boer — Mission, B.C.
Dick (Dianne) Boer — Port Alberni, B.C.
as well as over 125 grand- and great-grandchildren.
We rejoice that he is "safe in the arms of Jesus."
Correspondence address: Rev. H. Hendrik Boer, 2875 Pacific Heights Rd., Honolulu, HI 96813.

Personal

Would like to meet Christian lady between 55-60. I am a non-smoker, non-drinker and have been divorced for eight years. I am a choir member and I like travelling. Independent, southern Ontario. Please send letters to **File #2645, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.**

Widower, **lower sixties, retired and in good health,** likes to meet retired Christian lady **for friendship and/or possible relationship (southwest or Central Ontario). Please reply with note, name and phone number to** File #2638, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.

Neat widow, 71 years of age, **likes to meet neat gentleman**, 70-75 years of age. Please send letters to **File #2646, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.**

Would like to meet Christian lady between 55-60. I am a non-smoker, non-drinker. I am a choir member and I like travelling. Independent, southern Ontario. Please send letters to **File #2645, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.**

Open House

Open house and farewell for
ARIE and JANE VANDERSTOEL
on Saturday, June 15, 1996, from 2-4 p.m., at the Drayton Calvin Chr. School.

Personal

ONE TO ANOTHER
Christian companion magazine. Hundreds of readers Canada-wide. Single issue $5.
Write to:
#302, 1502-2nd Ave. S.
Lethbridge, AB T1J 4A2

Employment Wanted

19-year-old Belgian male with farm and machinery experience looking for summer work on Canadian farm. Call direct at **011-32-1467-9708.**

Vacations

FARMHOUSE IN FRIESLAND. Due to cancellation because of illness, available from June 28-July 18 (or part thereof), comfortable furnished **vacation farmhouse**. Many extras. In village 5 min. from Dokkum. Only Dfl.450 per week. For info. call **Ed Straatsma, phone (519) 622-6764 or fax (519) 622-8538.**

For rent in Hamilton (West Mountain), just minutes from highway access to Toronto, Niagara or local churches and Redeemer College. **Fully furnished house**, air-cond., large patio and garden. Many other conveniences. Available from **July 1 to Aug. 15**. $250 per week. Call as soon as possible at **(905) 574-2561.**

For rent: Are you interested in a **vacation in Newfoundland** this summer? Our fully furnished house on the outskirts of St. John's is available for rent in July and August to couples who would like to take advantage of this opportunity. Rental for **one week is $300.** For **two weeks or more** it is **$250 per week.** Contact us as soon as possible by phone, but not after June 28, at **(709) 368-7588** or write to
C. Van Dijk, 333 Bay Bulls Rd., St. John's, NF A1G 1B9

Calendar of Events on page 19...

Teachers

BELLEVILLE, Ont.: Quinte Chr. High School. We are a small (115 students), dynamic Christian High School located on the shores of beautiful Bay of Quinte in the city of Belleville, Ont. We are inviting applications for a **teaching position** opening for the school year 1996/97. Teaching responsibilities include the areas of history, law, world religions and related fields. Applicants with a Christian college background and a willingness to coach and give leadership in extra-curricular activities will be given preference. A living relationship with Jesus Christ, a love for children and a passion for learning are a must. Please send your applications, with resume to:
The Principal
Quinte Chr. High School
289 Pinnacle Street
Belleville, ON K8N 3B3

BRANTFORD, Ont.: Brantford Chr. School invites applications for a **full-time junior teaching position.** Teaching of French and music will be a requirement. Please send your application and resume to the principal:
Mr. Chris Vander Veen
Brantford Chr. School
7 Calvin Street
Brantford, ON N3S 3E4
Phone: (519) 752-0433

OAKVILLE, Ont.: John Knox Chr. School requires a **full-time** (6 hours per day) **educational assistant** for JK/SK, to work with children in general and help plan and execute program for special needs student in SK. Applicant must have teacher training. Special needs designation and/or experience would be an asset. Please address letter of application and resume to:
Mrs. L. Keith, Principal
John Knox Chr. School
2232 Sheridan Garden Drive
Oakville, ON L6J 7T1

Job Opportunities

CLINTON, Ont.: Clinton District Chr. School Society requires, for a period of four weeks, a **self-motivated person to promote membership** and to do the preliminary work for long- and short-term financial school support. Skills in public relations would be an asset. Salary to be negotiated. Students are welcome to apply. Mail or **fax (519-482-7614)** resume, including time available, to **Mr. Gord Kaastra, Box 545, Clinton, ON N0M 1L0, no later than June 14, 1996.**

Teachers

SURREY, B.C.: Fraser Valley Chr. High School, an interdenominational school in the Reformed tradition serving families and students in the lower Fraser Valley, has a **teaching opening** in the area of **art** for the 1996/97 school year. We are accepting applications for the **full-time** position of **administrative assistant**. The qualified individual must be able to handle a broad range of administrative and office functions. Word processing, Desktop Publishing and editing skills are required. Effective interpersonal skills, project management and supervisory abilities are additional requirements. An associate degree or its equivalent with experience in a similar position are required. Applicants should send resumes to:
Mr. Al Boerema, Principal
Fraser Valley Chr. High School
15353-92 Avenue, Surrey, BC
V3R 1C3
Phone (604) 581-1033

WOODBRIDGE, Ont.: Toronto District Chr. High School has a **5/6 position** in **physical education/science** available for the 1996/97 school year. Please send credentials and letters of recommendation to:
Ren Siebenga
377 Woodbrige Ave.
Woodbridge, ON L4L 2S8
e-mail address:
siebenga@tdch.torcon.com

Real Estate

Culligan Real Estate Ltd.
Broiler Farm, Waterford. **12950 units. Broiler quota. 60 Acres vegetable land. Cold storage. Good house.**
Klaas van Donkersgoed, sales rep.
(519) 291-5758 (home)
(519) 291-2002 (office)

For Rent

BERGENTHEIM
TE HUUR VOOR VAKANTIE:
Moderne gemeubileerde woning (modern furnished home) — per week of per maand — in Bergentheim, Overijssel (ongeveer 12 km van Ommen).
Voor volledige informatie bel of schrijf naar:
J. Snijders
651-4 Ave. E.
Brooks, AB T1R 0H4
Phone: (403) 362-4052 or (403) 362-2653

Save money by using our classifieds...

Classifieds

For Rent

Spacious two-bedroom apartment for rent. **Located just outside the town of** Dundas, Ont., **next to the Dundas Conservation Area. Within walking distance of public transport. Private entrance and patio. Non-smoker(s), no pets. $600/mo., first and last. Utilities included. Central air. Available immediately. Call (905) 627-5618 or (519) 752-6373.**

Due to short-term appointment with CRWM, **our house will be available for rent** beginning **Aug. 15, 1996.** Large 3-4 bedroom home, furnished if necessary, located in **Jordan, Ont.**, with easy access to the QEW. Phone: **(905) 562-5899.**

Summer Job Market

Calvin College student with excellent communication, organizational and word processing skills, is looking for any summer time work, starting as soon as possible. Please contact **Sharon Vandezande. Phone (905) 934-5954 or fax (905) 937-1130.**

Church News

Christian Reformed Church

Calls declined:
— to First, Chatham, Ont., Rev. David J. Tigchelaar of First, Drayton, Ont.

Vacations

GOING TO HOLLAND FOR VACATION?
Why not rent a VACATION APARTMENT and visit family and sight-see at your leisure.
CENTRALLY LOCATED near APELDOORN.
year-round accommodations.
FOR BROCHURE OR MORE INFORMATION CALL
Harold or Nellie at (905) 985-7891 or fax us at (905) 985-0195.

Bed & Breakfast

Beautiful Niagara Falls.
A pleasant 15 min. walk to the Falls.
Friendly home, nice rooms. Superb breakfast. Dutch spoken.
Mike & Joan Havinga
(905) 358-3534

Job Opportunities

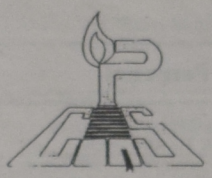
Job Opportunities

INTERIM ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

for a 400-student elementary school
for the '96/'97 school year

PACIFIC CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
VICTORIA, B. C.

Additional teachers required:
- K-12 Special Education
- Industrial Education 8-12
- Secondary French 8-12



Teachers must be committed Christians and certifiable by the B.C. College of Teachers. Send resumes and statements of faith to:

John A. Messelink, Secondary Principal
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CALVIN College

Mental Health

Treasures of darkness

Walfried E. Goossen

When I had a nervous breakdown at age 22 — 33 years ago — it was perhaps one of the worst types of breakdowns a person could have.

On a Saturday night I had attended a Youth For Christ meeting. When the altar call came I felt drawn to the front but didn't go up. The next day Sunday at home I became agitated and anxious. I suddenly started crying and yanked the living room curtains shut declaring that I was not fit to have the sun shine on me. I had turned from God, I thought, and was forever separated from him. I also lost all sense of identity, security and self-respect. I felt alone in the universe.

The series of misunderstandings in this whole unfortunate business were staggering. I was already saved and baptized on my confession of faith, by my own decision. Had I better understood my standing in Christ and human nature generally I may not have become ill. How could a young person with the promise from Jesus that he would finish the good work he began in me be so vulnerable?

I had an excuse for being born, but my life had meaning only in relation to my mother.

Normal awakening

One contributing factor was the evangelist's efforts to prove to us all that we are sinners. He listed a variety of sins that are especially tempting to young people, one being sex. Even if you think about it and about another person in those terms you are a sinner.

That may be so but I cannot believe there are very many people, born-again Christians included, who are not subject at times to such thoughts. It is normal, human, and within proper limits, healthy. It is not a question of lusting. It is the awakening of the young person to a new awareness of him- or herself, and an awareness that the little girl or boy next door has become a woman or a man.

Teenage years are among the most difficult, and teenage love can be the most traumatic. Unfortunately, many adults consider this cute and don't take teens seriously just when they need love and support more than ever.

However, I didn't accept my developing interest in girls as normal and felt drawn to the front by a false guilt. People of sensitive or scrupulous conscience often go to the front numerous times at such meetings. But you can and need only be saved once.

I was God's gift

There was of course a deeper, underlying reason for my illness, one which developed from the day I was born, during World War II. My father was taken to a concentration camp by the communists when I was eight months old. My mother was in bed, crippled by conversion hysteria, a psychosomatic crippling. Her doctor had told her she had a year to live; she had angina. She believed him and took to her bed to protect herself. There she was with three children, no husband, and paralyzed.

Was I an unwanted child? Who can blame her for her anguish. After my father was taken, the women of our town explained that I was God's gift to her to provide for her in her old age. I had an excuse for being born, but my life had meaning only in relation to my mother.

In fairness to her, to my brother Alfred (then 12) and sister Elenore, I was, in fact, a greatly loved child. Perhaps it had something to do with being cute. In any case, a lot of attention and affection was poured out on me, especially by my sister who raised me during the early years while our mother was still paralyzed. She was all of seven when I was born. We all had to grow up fast.

Separation anxiety

It is not difficult to understand some of the problems which developed along the way. My mother's attachment to her children, and eventually mainly to me, was anxiety based. She was always afraid of being abandoned — a result of losing her husband. There were no social welfare safety nets in Canada at the time (we came in 1948 via Rotterdam) and she couldn't work regularly because of her angina.

Her dependence and tenacious hold on me was, of course, not healthy for either of us. I could make no plans for myself. Girls, marriage and freedom were but wistful dreams for me. Often she assured me she wouldn't live long, and when she was gone I would be free to live my own life. She really believed this and sincerely wanted the best for me. She was, I think, somewhat ashamed to be alive and be a burden.

If she had been able to relax and just trust her children to care for her it would all have been easier. But anxiety often makes it difficult for people to trust even God. She was neurotic, a troubled person, a sensitive, devout girl from a small Russian town when she married in the local Mennonite Church. Life dealt her many severe blows and she had as much right to her illness as I had to mine. It is life. No one sinned or was punished.

Vulnerable sensitivity

It would be simplistic and unfair to explain my illness all in relation to my mother. I was also born with a sensitivity which has in later years been very helpful in writing and in counselling people, but which also left me vulnerable to guilt-tripping and a feeling of unworthiness. I absorbed the "worm theology" which is so prevalent in parts of the Christian community, and grew up thinking I had no right to excel or want things for myself — that was all sin and God was a spoil sport.

I've learned better since. That, of course, was only part of my religious experience. I also believed in a loving, heavenly Father, in Jesus our faithful Savior. The day of my baptism was the greatest, most joyful day of my life. To balance my dark introversion the Lord gave me a healthy sense of humor and many cherished childhood and family memories.

My illness then can be traced to environment (nurture), my temperament and predisposition to nervous problems (nature), and my own manner of functioning (autonomy).

Many treasures

The greatest healing factor in my case was maturing over a number of years, a time when I came to know my Savior better, when my understanding of Scripture was enhanced and I learned more about life. During that decade my church and family were very supportive, especially my pastor and his wife. I never turned against evangelists or the church. These were the most important factors in my healing as I went through the usual treatment programs, routines and medications.

My wife and I will celebrate our 23rd anniversary this June (to everyone's amazement, including mine). I am a certified pastoral counsellor, a freelance writer with several hundred short publications and several books; I've done shows on community radio and TV, have managed a rehabilitation workshop, earned my B.A. in social work and am in charge of the adult Sunday school at Hamilton Mennonite Church. I've also preached in several churches. I list these things simply to assure people who may be suffering now — and their families — that we do not even suspect the good things God has prepared for those who love him, even in this life. Nothing is impossible with him.

Out of the darkness of mental illness he can give us many treasures, most significantly a greater faith and love for him.

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Look for our Business Directory in next week's issue

Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

June 7-8 Banquet and conference to celebrate the 25th anniversary of "The Voice of the Martyrs" (founded by Pastor Richard and Mrs. Sabina Wurmbrand), at Ontario Bible College, **Toronto**, Ont. Info.: phone (905) 276-6210 or fax (905) 276-0228 (#)

June 9 Dutch worship service led by Rev. John D. Hellinga, 3 p.m., Chr. Ref. Church, **Aylmer**, Ont. Info.: (519) 773-3025.

June 10-13 The "4-Day Evening Walk" at the Botanical Gardens, **Burlington**, Ont. To pre-register call (905) 383-6319 or write to: 4-Day Evening Walk Committee, P.O. Box 79554, Hamilton, ON L8T 5A2 (#)

June 12 The 27th "Hollandse Dag" in **Moorefield**, Ont. Starts at 10 a.m., in the Community Centre. Speaker: Rev. H. van Essen. Take along your own lunch and coffee cup.(#)

June 15 24th Annual "Grunneger Picnic," 10 a.m., Grand River Conservation Area, **Rockwood**, Ont. For info. contact Harry Klungel, 505 Pinewood Ave., Exeter, ON N0M 1S1

June 19 Snowbirds, please note! The Cypress Garden Winter Ministry (Winterhaven, Fl.) picnic will be held at 10 a.m., Southside Park, **Woodstock**, Ont. Info.: (519) 285-2904.

July 8-26 "Summer School," sponsored by Wycliffe College and ICS. Theme: "...bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God" (Col.1:10) At ICS, **Toronto**, Ont. Info.: Chris Barrigar (416) 979-2870 or fax (416) 979-0471 (#).

July 14 Dutch worship service led by Rev. J. Kuntz, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster**, Ont.

July 17 An evening of entertainment with former wrestler Jake ("The Snake") Roberts. "His thrilling testimony is something you don't want to miss." At 7 p.m., Kennedy Road Tabernacle, 141 Kennedy Rd., **Brampton**, Ont. Info.: Bill Morgan at (905) 677-1846. Freewill offering.

Aug. 25 Dutch worship service led by Rev. Henry R. De Bolster, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster**, Ont.

News

Relief and revival come to Burundi hillside

Peter Vander Zaag

CERRU, Burundi — The narrow, bumpy road led us to one of the frontier hills bordering Rwanda. Along the way, heavily armed soldiers stopped us at two checkpoints asking for our identification and our reason for going to Cerru, "the long hill." A huge Rwandan refugee camp marred the quiet natural landscape along the way.

Finally we arrived. The compound had a large building made of small tree trunks with some grass, and plastic tarps for a roof. Banana leaves served as the walls. On low benches sat a gathering of some 500 people listening to God's Word. This Wednesday afternoon they had baptized 348 new believers in a nearby lake. The previous Sunday, that many more had been immersed, signifying the beginning of their new life and hope in their Savior, Jesus Christ.

Jim Zylstra (project manager for Dorcas Aid in Burundi), two pastors, Emmanuel and Onesime, and I got out of our jeep. Instantly we were surrounded by a group as they sang and danced with joy and enthusiasm. The earth seemed to shake under the hot afternoon sun as they came clapping, shaking hands and embracing us. There were little, frail old women, young women — some with babies on their backs — and young men and children. Jim was totally overwhelmed and later said, "Now I know what it feels like to be President Clinton."

After the greetings, the pastor led us to a nearby shack where we, the unannounced guests, were served an instant meal of cassava, potatoes, sweet potatoes and beans. In that windowless room the pastors were exuberant as they explained how God was working a mighty revival in their area after the civil war. In the past year, 1,300 Burundaise Hutu families from Rwanda had returned to Cerru. Many were now occupying the fields formerly farmed by the departed Tutsi families. Over 200 local families who had returned from local Burundaise refugee camps had been resettled in the past months. Virtually every home in Cerru had been destroyed, and many people had been killed by groups of bandits.

Relief and revival

After they told of their need, we explained our program. Dorcas works through Partner Christian groups. We want the church to identify the needy families who had already returned to their farms or who wish to return. Dorcas provides assistance by supplying cooking utensils, hoes, seeds of the major food crops, and relief food while the first crop is growing. Relief food and seeds are gifts from Canadian Christians via the Canadian Food Grain Bank and from the Netherlands. We hoped the church could help with rebuilding houses.

Early the next morning we set out on a safari to visit several families in Cerru. The first family we met as we walked along the mountain path was a young woman in her mid-20s and her two children. She told us her husband had been killed, their house destroyed and all their possessions stolen. She had returned to start again. With sticks and mud, she and her neighbors had built a three by four metre room for a home, with a piece of plastic for a roof.

Tears came to my eyes as I peeked into the one room house through a hole in the plastic roof: two pots, a few pieces of wood on the side of a hole where the cooking fire was made, and a piece of cardboard on the ground for a bed with one sheet for the three of them. I dared to ask to take their picture.

The next stop across the path was a hut built out of branches and grass in an inverted U shape. Here a husband, wife and two children now lived. They were busy cleaning their abandoned fields, hoping to plant some beans and sweet potatoes. They showed us the rubble of what remained of their original house. I soon had the picture of the sorrow such people had experienced and still lived with each day.

A widow and her children return to their farm, rebuild their small shack and try to start again.

Seed and salvation

We returned to the Cerru church and made an agreement with the pastor to help 700 families by providing 14 tons of bean seed immediately as well as hoes and other seed later. We also agreed to help with some relief food for the length of the growing season.

Burundi has had favorable growing conditions, permitting the country to be 97 per cent self-sufficient in food supply! Arrangements were finalized and we left, promising to return in one week.

Leaving Cerru was physically possible, but the scenes I witnessed will never be erased. The sorrow of death and destruction has hit everyone. The joy of the wealth and love of Jesus Christ has become their only hope and comfort. Such love and excitement can heal many of the deepest wounds. What a privilege to see the desire of believers to live and work together, regardless of ethnic background.

PHOTOS COURTESY CRWRC

A child makes his way through a Burundi refugee camp on a cold, wet day.

News Digest

13th century church burns

CAIRO, Egypt (EP) — A 13th century Coptic Christian Church south of Cairo was damaged by fire. Police are investigating whether the blaze at the Abu el-Sayfayn Church in Al-Azab was set by Muslim extremists. The altar, icons and ancient wooden benches were destroyed in the fire, with damage estimated at $150,000. Islamic extremists in Egypt have targeted churches during their four-year campaign to replace the current government with a strict Muslim regime.

Back to offering living water

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia (EP) — The Lutheran St. Petri Church in St. Petersburg, which was seized by the state and used as a swimming pool for 40 years during the Soviet regime, will be reopened as a church on Oct. 31. The sanctuary, which was once the centre of Lutheranism in Russia, will be rededicated (after extensive renovation) on Reformation Day.

What's that smell?

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (EP) — A thief who hid in a church cupboard was discovered by Argentine police who were tipped off by his foul body odor. Juan Carlos Martinez, 26, hid in a church in the town of Leandro Alem. According to the *Clarin* daily newspaper, police had nearly given up their search when they smelled him. A judge later freed Martinez on the condition that he promise to quit stealing and to wash himself daily.

Is there a lesson here?

ATLANTA — Former U.S. president Jimmy Carter received a standing ovation when he caught a foul ball bare-handed during a Braves/Padres game in Atlanta. But actor Charlie Sheen came up empty-gloved after purchasing all of the seats behind the left field fence at California's Anaheim Stadium to snag a homer. Nobody hit a home run near him.

Christian Science Monitor